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Responding to the Storyworld of The Hunger Games through a Fan Fiction Fandom

Misty Nichole Horning

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Responding to the Storyworld of The Hunger Games
through a Fan Fiction Fandom

by

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M.A., Secondary Education, University of New Mexico, 2002

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to both of my parents. You have never, ever given up on me, and you have taught me that whatever I *wished* to do, I *could* do. It is only through your unwavering love and support that I am the person I am today. I love you both more than words can describe.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my husband. Mark, thank you for putting up with my mood swings, consoling me during my breakdowns, and offering me support and guidance when I needed it. You were there when I was frustrated, stressed, angry, upset, and annoyed, yet you chose to stay. Thank you, and I owe you.

And then there is Ashley. You are my best achievement, and nothing will ever outshine the pride I have for you and all that you have become. I hope you always remember that you also can do anything that you set your mind to doing. I love you more than life itself, my little ray of sunshine.

Thank you, and I love you all tremendously.

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Over the past few years I have received countless hours of support and encouragement from a great number of individuals.

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Also, the hundreds, upon hundreds of hours spent with soon-to-be Dr. Heather Dahl provided much needed insights and encouragement. Heather, we really are smarter when together.

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Abstract

Many reader response theorists have researched how readers respond to literature; however, my dissertation addresses the question of what the nature of fan fiction responses is in relation to the storyworld of The Hunger Games, based solely on the responses themselves, independent of the writer. Employing Henry Jenkins's "Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show" as a framework for analyzing how these writers enter into the storyworld, I explore fifteen fan fiction stories utilizing a textual analysis methodology. My findings support the argument that these writings are to be valued as tangible examples of what Louise Rosenblatt terms as an aesthetic reading in her transactional theory of reading, as they represent evidence of engagement with and critical thinking of The Hunger Games series. I conclude my dissertation with a discussion of public education and schools. Noting the consideration given to standardized assessments, I address the concern that schools will move towards more close readings of certain text exemplars, moving away from independent reading and young adult fiction, undervaluing their roles in regards to how readers become engaged with them. To challenge this move, I suggest ideas of what educators can do in order to better engage students, stimulating their intrinsic desires to learn. Drawing upon research by James Marshall, as well as Rebecca Black, I conclude with their ideas of what school districts should consider as we educate our twenty-first century students.

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The University of New Mexico

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Chapter One: Introduction

Today's readers are provided with various avenues for exploring and creating stories. Technology expands a storyworld (Langer, 2011) well beyond the pages of a novel into a multi-media, participatory landscape. For example, as part of the storyworld of *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008, 2009, 2010), a popular series of young adult novels, a reader may follow a character on *Facebook*, watch the movies based on the novels, or create her own tribute to compete in the games through the interactive website, *The Hunger Games Roleplay Wiki* (n.d.). Role playing can be supplemented with costuming and readers may even create their own video versions of the story and post them on YouTube. All of these interactions offer new opportunities for studying how people interpret and make meaning; however, the question remains what meaning of the story is being demonstrated? How do these explorations illustrate what resonates with the readers? What do these different responses to literature represent?

This study employs one of these Internet avenues, fan fiction, to study the nature of meaning created in response to a literary work. By definition, fan fiction (also seen as fanfiction, fanfic, or fic) is any fiction that is written by fans of a game, movie, TV show, or book (Black, 2008; Gee & Hayes, 2010), as well as stories generated from an already existing canon, which includes settings, characters, or plots, to share with others (Pugh, 2005, p. 169; Thomas, 2007). Any "creative material featuring characters that have previously appeared in work whose copyright is held by others" (Coppa, 2014, p. 219) is considered part of this genre. Fan fiction has grown in popularity with the advent of the Internet, making it easier for people to continue their favorite stories, while sharing them with the world for comments and reviews.

Fan fiction is built on the concept of intertextuality, “the relations between texts that occurs when one work refers to or borrows characters, phrases, situations, or ideas from another” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 27). By utilizing pre-existing characters and storylines, fans may continue the story by adding elements that they wish had been present in the original. Not fueled by fame, these fans are driven by their love of the original, and the wish to share their ideas with others who share the same love.

Fan fiction sites, such as *Fanfiction.net*, *Wattpad*, and *LiveJournal* allow readers to upload their own narratives that continue the original story on the Internet for others to read. These interactive on-line communities allow fans to comment and receive feedback concerning their stories, while also requiring them to remain true to the original work. To investigate the nature of meaning making in this environment, I have selected stories from *fanfiction.net* that pertain to the bestselling series of young adult novels and movies, The Hunger Games. This series began with the publication of the first novel in the series *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008). Followed with *Catching Fire* (Collins, 2009) and *Mockingjay* (Collins, 2010), the series became popular with many readers, of many differing ages. Due to its popularity as novels, the series soon grew to a movie franchise as well, spawning four films based on the series. As of this writing, The Hunger Games has the fifth highest number of fan fiction stories related to the novels and films on the widely used *Fanfiction.net* (*fanfiction.net*, April 8, 2016). With the final movie in the series, *Mockingjay, Part 2*, released in U.S. theaters during November 2015, and on DVD in March 2016, there remains a continuing interest in this saga, resulting in even more newly created stories and characters. From March 2013 to the present, the number of fan fiction stories related to The Hunger Games has grown from 25,800 to 44,4000,

illustrating that readers are still exploring the storyworld through their interaction in this digital fandom.

By looking at this concept of intertextuality through a textual analysis study, and utilizing Henry Jenkins's "Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show" (2013), grounded within the theoretical stance of the transactional theory of reading (Rosenblatt, 1978), this project's goal is to study readers' responses to The Hunger Games, through their fan fiction writings in order to explore the nature of interpretation and response in this environment. By analyzing what is demonstrated in the writings of various Hunger Games fan fiction, as well as what aspects of critical reading are evident, I hope to understand what the fan fiction can tell me about the fan's response to literature, noting how the meaning that is made by readers correlates to the themes and importance that I as an educator find, thus illustrating how these fan fictions stories are authentic aesthetic responses to literature of the story.

Statement of the Problem

Inquiry into the potential meanings of texts is most often conducted by academic readers who conduct detailed analyses framed by selected critical perspectives. These detailed studies focus on what these expert readers see as potential meanings of the text, offering little insight into the meanings created by enthusiastic readers who immerse themselves in the worlds created by those texts. According to Rosenblatt (1978), meaning is created through transactions with texts. Texts include works that are presented in print, but in recent years, the notion of text has been expanded to include works that consist other modalities, like audio recordings, film and movies, and even clothing, toys and other paraphernalia. Meaning is not located within specific texts but is a creation of

individuals and groups of people who bring their experiences and knowledge to the act of interpretation within a social context. Reading, writing, speaking, listening, and doing are social actions that are framed by societal expectations, and literacy is mastery of those actions in a way that encourages individual and private meaning, as well as public and collective meaning.

Currently, schooling is grounded in a different perspective on reading, best represented by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2016), adopted by many states as a guideline for curriculum development and student assessment. The CCSS situates meaning in the various texts that students encounter and that it is the students task to learn how to extract meaning a critically analyze the structure and form of those texts. In contrast, Rosenblatt theorizes that it is the readers' stance that frames the kind of meaning created. Rosenblatt distinguishes between two stances: efferent and aesthetic. The efferent stance focuses readers on taking away information from the text, and the aesthetic stance focuses readers on experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and ideas evoked by the text, what Langer (2011) describes as entering the storyworld. The text provides a virtual experience in which one lives through the events, meets the people, and situates themselves with this imagined world, complete with sensory and emotional reactions. Given the CCSS, aesthetic reading rarely takes place in classrooms. Reading is framed primarily as a hunt for information or an analysis of structure and form. The CCSS make no mention of developing lifelong readers, those who take pleasure in reading, or who may even imagine themselves as part of the world created by a text. Even if a text can provide an immersive experience, schooling and testing guide students away from prolonged imaginative engagement. This

one-sided perspective on reading provides students with a truncated reading process in school, while they are experiencing texts outside of school in rich and engaging ways.

James Paul Gee (1996) writes on giving a name to an emerging field of study based on research from various disciplines concerning literacy. Although the theories and research were different, a common theme appeared concerning literacy; thus “The New Literacy Studies” was named (p. 39). Contrary to the conventional psychological approach to literacy, that “the 'ability to read' and 'the ability to write' were treated as things people did inside their heads,” The New Literacy Studies believed that literacy was a social act (Gee, n.d., p. 2). With the advent readers, as well as researchers, negotiating the changing nature of literacy, there is a need to understand what readers are doing, what they are learning, and how they are responding. Educators need to pay attention to the texts that resonate with readers, as well as their responses to these stories so that they can better understand the meanings that readers derive and how they derive them. They must also “become acquainted with...literate practices and existing technological competencies” (Black, 2008, p. xiv). The fan fiction stores related to *The Hunger Games* provide opportunities to study meaning in an out-of-school, socially motivated and technologically supported environment. By understanding the social nature of literacy, as well as these multi-media technologies, I believe that we can better understand how to engage this new generation of learners.

This study will investigate the characteristics of the illustrated meaning-making evident in the fan fiction, as compared to my own close readings of the texts, as well as my own formed ideas concerning the aspects of dystopian literature and fans’ entrances into the storyworlds, as described in Henry Jenkins’s work (2013). Along with

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Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading, these two elements – dystopian literature characteristics and themes and entrances into the storyworld – will provide the thematic framework with which to analyze the fan fiction stories. With my experience of using these novels in an academic setting, as well as due to my sixteen years as a secondary, English teacher, this study will also empirically investigate the similarities and differences between the meanings generated by these two stances, my own and those of the fan fiction writers, toward creating meaning. The results of this study will contribute to our understanding of readers' intent and response as they add to a storyworld. Understanding the readers' responses will ultimately help educators to better engage students in class.

Essentially, I believe that many teachers have lost sight of what it means for a reader to respond to a text, in addition to understanding how these responses illustrate the transaction that occurs between the reader and the text. With a concentrated focus on standards and testing, many educators do not place an emphasis on relationship(s) that students may have with a text's storyworld, thus missing out on many opportunities for engagement. With a focus on the elements of critical reading evident in fan fiction stories written on The Hunger Games, this study will help educators to understand that there are many differing ways in which readers may engage with a text in order to illustrate their response, with fan fiction being just one example of such.

My assumption within this study is *not all readers are fans* but *all fans are readers or writers*, whether by reading the books or viewing the movies, because they are so immersed within the world that they will write fan fiction. For clarity, I have created the term *fanners* to represent those who are engaged in the storyworld of The Hunger

Games through their fan fiction writing, since they are both *fans* and *readers or writers*.

When referring to classroom practices and/or implications, I will use the term *students* to differentiate from the fanners who choose to enter the storyworld of their own volition.

Background to the Study

My interest in this study grows out of my experiences as a secondary English language arts teacher, a popular culture nerd, a reader, and, most recently as an acafan, an academic who is also a fan (Jenkins, “Confessions of an Aca-fan”).

My Role as a Teacher

As an English language arts teacher, I approached this topic through my studies and beliefs regarding reader response theory, mainly through the work of Louise Rosenblatt (1978, 1995b). As I began to look more closely at the growth of the multi-media aspects of young adult literature, I began to question how the digital interactions of readers affect their response to literature. I also began to more fully question what an aesthetic response to literature looks like in a traditional classroom setting.

It is not only my role as a curious researcher that drives this study, but also my role as an educator. I strive to bring authentic and engaging lessons to my students, while also negotiating my way through standards and how my students are assessed by standardized testing as they respond to a text. With a deeper understanding of what the fan fiction responses to The Hunger Games represent, I will improve my teaching, but more importantly, it will improve my students’ learning.

Nerd Alert

"The Force is strong with this one." ~ Darth Vader

A friend and I were walking out of Flying Star one Saturday and she laughed at my *Star Wars* messenger bag. Now, whether she was laughing at *Star Wars* or the fact that a grown woman was using the bag, I am not sure. I proceeded to tell her that the coming weekend was the Albuquerque Comic-Con, and I was going but not dressing up because I do draw the line on my nerdiness. She didn't understand what I was saying about Comic-Con so I had to explain it in a bit more detail. She was enlightened (amused?) by my explanation in which one thing led to another and somehow, in the course of just a few steps, I was telling her about how I had wanted to attend the annual national Comic-Con convention in San Diego. Suffice it to say, she simply laughed, and continued on.

Now, I don't think I am that odd or nerdy. Do I like *Star Wars*? Yes. Am I sometimes enthralled by the various story lines of comics and graphic novels? Yes. Do I enjoy pop culture? Yes. Do I have a favorite superhero? Yes, who doesn't? *Mine is Batman, in case you were curious.* All of this though is just one small part of who I really am. None of this means that I am not a mature adult. I do take things seriously – sometimes too seriously. All of this, my loves of literature and various fandoms (possible nerdiness and all), create the person I am, and it is this person who approaches the world belonging to the fans of The Hunger Games.

This is an important characteristic of who I am that I bring to this study. While some others may see me as obsessed with superheroes, zombies, and *Star Wars*, my love of these topics helps me to better understand the world of pop culture that many of my

students relate to themselves. My knowledge of these topics also helps me to better engage students within the classroom by building academically on their own interests.

Always a Reader

Books have been my best friends since before I can remember. Being raised as an Army brat, we moved around often. I was naturally, as well as painfully, shy. Perhaps it was due to the speech problems I had as a toddler, but I have always struggled with talking to people. In essence, I did not learn to speak for others to understand me until I was almost five-years-old. It was only because my dad finally convinced my mom that I had a problem that I was placed in speech therapy when I was almost four.

All I remember from therapy is sitting in a small room while wearing large stereo earphones. According to my mom, I was listening to words being repeated over and over so that I would “learn” the rules for pronunciation. I did this for just over a year and by the time I was ready to start kindergarten, I was able to speak well enough to be understood by mostly everyone. I continued speech therapy throughout the next year, and by the time I entered first grade, I was able to speak clearly, although I was incredibly shy about speaking aloud. Instead of with people, I found solace in books. I understood the characters, and they understood me. Madeleine L’Engle’s heroine Meg Murray struggled with being shy and felt awkward, something with which I was familiar. Rather than worrying about my real-world shyness, I immersed myself into the storyworlds of characters, sharing their struggles and triumphs, which I continue to do so as an adult.

I love to read. My mother had always read to me as a child, fostering my love of books, and although money was tight at times, she always tried to find a way to buy me a new book. Throughout the rest of my childhood, books remained my best friends,

providing me with ways to escape some of the more stressful times of my life. It was reflecting upon this when I realized that my own fascination with fan fiction began, although at the time it didn't have a name.

When in seventh grade, we moved from Arizona to Maryland. Leaving the beginning of the school year behind, I had to face a new school and new friends. Due to housing constraints and problems, we were without our possessions for two months; all that I had were the clothes I had packed and my favorite book *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton.

Being without possessions, while living in basically a hotel room, I read *The Outsiders* over and over. And over and over again. I may have had other books with me, but this one stands out. Whether because of my connection to the characters, or the feeling of being an outsider myself, this novel allowed me to escape into another world. A world where I felt comfortable and safe. A world where I knew what to expect. A world where I knew the characters. I wanted to be a part of this world, so I put myself in it.

I inserted myself into the story as a character. I wrote about saving Dallas Winston, my first literary crush. I wrote about Johnny's death, and its effects on me. I even drew outfits that I envisioned my character, *myself*, wearing. This became my world, until I was comfortable to join the *real* world. At the time, I did not realize that when I wrote myself into *The Outsiders* that I was creating what is known as a *Mary Sue* character; a character placed in a fan fiction story that resembles the writer (Pugh, 2005, p. 85). At twelve-years-old, my journey with fan fiction had begun.

Acafan

I am an academic who loves the Hunger Games. I have read every book, seen every movie, explored the related Internet sites, and read copious amounts of literary criticism of the texts and the phenomenon. My study is framed by my passion for the story and all its possible interpretations. As I study *The Hunger Games* as an example of a dystopia, I will explore the pressure to conform, media manipulation or propaganda, division of society, or abused advances in technology that are characteristic of the genre (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013) By utilizing these themes to analyze the fan fiction stories, I will also be able to determine the thematic connections that fanners make to the themes represented in the original texts that began The Hunger Games storyworld. My personal experiences with, knowledge of, and review of related literary criticism of the related texts and phenomenon will provide a framework that will allow me to better understand the field of possibilities that fanners encounter when they take up this story and how they position themselves within that field.

Theoretical Framework

In *The Reader, The Text, The Poem*, Louise Rosenblatt (1978) makes the claim that the reader, who has “remained in shadow” and has been “taken for granted” can no longer be rendered invisible like that of Ralph Ellison’s hero in *Invisible Man* (p. 1). Primarily, “the focus was on a literary work as a mirroring of ‘reality’” and then moved on to the prominence of the poet, sometimes seen as synonymous to poetry, but still, the reader remained in the darkness (p. 2). Bringing the reader into the light demonstrates the relationship further that “the reader also is a link in the ‘universal intercourse’ between

the world of ‘reality’ and the world of poetry” (p. 34). The importance of the reader can no longer be overlooked.

Readers must not only take into account the symbols on the page, but they must also ponder what parts of themselves they are contributing to the reading event. They must reflect on their own experiences, beliefs, predispositions, and desires, as well as question and reflect on the thoughts made by other readers (Probst, 1990, p. 30). The role of the reader is for her to make a connection to the text, not only to understand it, but also to create meaning from it. It is a dynamic process that requires the reader to engage with the work actively, resulting in a production of an event rather than the consumption of words on a page.

Building on the importance of the reader, David Bleich (1978) argues that Rosenblatt’s equality between the reader and the text is flawed. Whereas Rosenblatt theorizes that within the transaction a poem is created – both the reader and the text acting on the other in order to achieve the event – in reality, it is only the reader who acts since “it can hardly be the case that a text actually does act on the reader” (p. 110). Within his subjective paradigm, he states “only subjects are capable of initiating action” (p. 111); however, this changes the reading event. Rather than readers *transacting with* the literature, they are *reacting to* the literature, thus changing the experience from one that is active, to one that is passive.

Unlike Bleich, Rosenblatt (1978) believes that the text may merely be paper and ink, but it “is an essential element of any reading act” (p. 23). It is the reader who brings life to the work, as he “carries on a dynamic, personal, and unique activity” with the text (p. 15). Doing this, the reader actively draws on past experiences in order to understand

the meaning because "...the reader's creation of a poem out of a text must be an active, self-ordering and self-corrective process" (p. 11). The text itself has two functions; it acts as a stimulus which activates elements of the reader's past experience with literature as well as with life, and it serves as a guide for what will be held in the forefront of the reader's attention (p. 11).

Although literature, especially that read by young adults, has changed since Rosenblatt wrote *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*, I agree with her assertion that every text has the potential of being a literary work of art since it is the reader who approaches the text aesthetically, creating a literary experience, a *poem*, an event in the life of the reader (p. 12). The beauty and simplicity of Rosenblatt's approach to literature is that it is not just the classics that readers can approach and thus create an experience; even the trashy works may still be regarded as literary works of art because a reader may adopt an aesthetic stance, resulting therefore in a poem. The intrinsic value of literature resides in the reader living through the transaction with the text.

Within this transaction between the reader and the text, Rosenblatt (1978) outlines that the basic model of the reading process simply "consists in the response to cues" (p. 54). Readers adopt either an efferent or aesthetic stance, and then develop a framework, organizing principles, relating to the organization of the text. This is followed by expectations that influence responses, which may lead to the adjustment of the framework, resulting in the final synthesis. In essence, readers are propelled by the desire "to see what happens next" (p. 54). Assumed within is the belief that the text opens itself to a "coherent experience" that the reader is able to understand. To fall short of this implies a weakness within the text itself, or perhaps a fault on the reader's part (p. 55).

To understand the transaction means to understand both what the reader and the text contribute to the experience, understanding not only what the text *says* but also *how* the reader shapes his experience through the reading process. It is the transaction between the two. The experience is where the meeting of the minds, the text and the reader, meet. I believe that a fan fiction story is a tangible example of this experience; it is the meeting of the minds, the poem, an example of an aesthetic response.

Because of a reader's constantly changing experiences, different texts may be read at different times, with readers achieving a different *poem* with each new reading. The reader and the text may remain the same, but the experience, the event, will change. In essence, each poem is the result of a particular text being read at a particular time, in a particular environment, at a particular moment in the life of the reader (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 20). The emphasis being on the transaction between the reader and the text, it is the reader who internalizes the work, therefore bringing out the meaning, at least the meaning according to her, during that reading, at that time.

However, this study focuses on a particular kind of reader, one who is so enamored of and involved in a story that they are considered as a fan. They are not just readers; they are fanners. They are so engaged in the story that they not only want to experience the story, they want to contribute to it. Their contributions offer a window into the nature of aesthetic response. To make the connection between fan fiction and response to literature, I will use Jenkins' (2013) "Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show" as a frame for analysis of how fanners enter and adapt the storyworld (p. 162-177). Although these ten strategies refer to how to spin off from an existing television show, a television show is a text that represents a storyworld. The use of these strategies

in fan fiction offers insight into the relationship between the existing story world and what the fanners write. Similarities and nuances of difference offer insight into what these fanners considered important enough to write about and how they sought to make the stories their own.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the storyworld of The Hunger Games and the fan fiction that is written for it as a means for better understanding how people make meaning across multimedia texts. To guide the research I have created the following overarching research question and a series of sub-questions:

- What can fan fiction tell us about how people make meaning as a result of an aesthetic experience?
 - The Hunger Games is characterized as dystopian literature. What are the features of dystopian literature and how do the novels and movies in the Hunger Games series demonstrate those features?
 - What patterns of character, themes, plot, and setting are present in the fan fiction stories?
 - How do the themes and characteristics of the genre of dystopian literature compare to the themes presented within the fan fiction stories?
 - How do the fan fiction stories enter into and contribute to the storyworld of The Hunger Games?
 - What examples of critical thinking and critical reading are present in fan fiction stories?

The texts that I will use to complete this study will be selected fan fiction stories written by fanners; however, this is not a study of fan fiction. This is a study examining responses to literature, with fan fiction illustrating one type of response. It is the nature of the response that is at the heart of this study, as I examine and challenge my own beliefs of what an aesthetic response to literature resembles. Fan fiction found online allows me the opportunity to focus purely on the response itself, rather than on the fanner's intentions and thoughts as she wrote the piece. Kept isolated from the fanner, I can examine the characteristics of the response, analyzing the aspects of critical reading of The Hunger Games that may be found within. Upon the conclusion of the research, I will be able to describe how fan fiction can help educators to better understand a student's response to literature.

This dissertation is organized in the following way. Chapter Two is a review of the pertinent people, literature, theories, and research related to this study. Ranging from Louise Rosenblatt to Henry Jenkins to The Hunger Games to studies of fan fiction, I explain how each connects to this study as a whole. The methodology of the research is outlined in Chapter Three, where I provide a description of the design of the study. In Chapter Four, I detail the findings of my research, and Chapter Five concludes this study with discussion and implications for further research.

Chapter Two: Review of Pertinent People, Literature, Theories, and Research

There are multiple layers embedded within the research question of what is the nature of responses to The Hunger Games in online fan fiction stories. My personal experience with and understanding of Reader Response Theory, specifically that of Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading, will be the basis of my theoretical orientation as I explore and analyze the storyworld of The Hunger Games and its online components found in fan fiction. My analysis will be built upon key concepts and theories related to popular culture, such as that of Henry Jenkins's transmedia storytelling. In addition, a look to The Hunger Games fandoms, namely that found on Fanfiction.net, as an example of James Paul Gee's notion of affinity spaces, as well as an illustration of Jenkins's explanation of participatory cultures will underscore the importance of understanding a reader's response to literature found in fan fiction.

Reader Response Theory

“...the reader also is a link in the ‘universal intercourse’ between the world of ‘reality’ and the world of poetry.”

~Louise M. Rosenblatt
The Reader, the Text, the Poem, p. 34

Transactional theory of reading. Reader response theory. Response theory. These all seem to relate to the same theory, but with their own subtle nuances. Whereas Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading relates to the transaction that occurs between a reader and a text, Reader Response theories may vary based on the importance placed on the text or the reader. What they all have in common though is the importance a reader brings to the text and how she creates meaning, as well as recognizing that the reader's response will vary “considerably according to differences in specific social, historical, or cultural contexts” (Beach, 1993, pp. 7, 9).

Due to the varying types of texts, purposes for reading, and readers themselves, Richard Beach (1993) categorizes different types of response theories into five theoretical perspectives: textual, experiential, psychological, social, and cultural (p. 8). Where textual theorists focus on the knowledge of a reader's understanding of text conventions and genres, experiential theorists concentrate more on the reader's actual engagement with the text. Somewhat related to experiential theorists, psychological theorists look to the reader's thinking processes, noting how each reader's processes are unique to the individual, rather than focusing on the experience with the text. Both social and cultural theorists wish to see how varying contexts impact readers. Similar to one another, social theorists wish to determine the influence of the social context on the reader, whereas cultural theorists focus on the larger contexts of how cultural values and historical contexts help to shape responses (Beach, 1993, pp. 8-9).

My focus is that of Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading, which Beach aligns within the category of experiential theorists, referring to her as being central to these theories due to her main interest in the *engagement* of the readers with texts (1993, p. 49). However, this does not mean that she can only be aligned within the experiential theories. Rosenblatt's theory transcends all facets of Beach's categories in the ways that she focuses on the importance of the reader's reading process, what she brings to the reading, as well as the importance of cultural factors influencing the reading.

Theoretical Framework: The Transactional Theory of Reading

Drawing upon the work of John Dewey (1896), Louise Rosenblatt, in her seminal book *Literature as Exploration* (1938), characterizes the process of making meaning of literature as a transaction between the reader and the text, resulting in the "poem". She

further delineates her explanations in her later book, *The Reader, the Text and the Poem* (1978) and numerous articles (1982, 1986, 1993, 1994). The reader, of course, is the person interpreting or trying to make sense of a text, and a text is any work of fiction or nonfiction. However, “the text is not simply the inked marks on the page or even the uttered vibrations in the air...signs become verbal symbols, become words, by virtue of their being potentially recognizable...in a reading situation ‘the text’ may be thought of as the printed signs in their capacity to serve as symbols” (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 12). The *poem*, “an event in time,” occurs when both the text and the reader are brought together – the meaning that is created through the transaction (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 12).

Rosenblatt uses the term *transaction* rather than *interaction* because she, like Dewey, believes that the term better represents the phenomenon of reading. A transaction, in her terms, allows for both the reader and the text to be transformed through the process, describing “an ongoing process in which the elements of factors are...each conditioned by and conditioning the other” (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 17). Each reader brings “to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations” thus adding dimensions to the original work, creating a unique experience – one that is never repeated since it is the result of the transaction that occurred between the reader and the text, during that particular reading, with those particular experiences, at that particular time (Rosenblatt, 1995b, p. 30). She further explains that this transaction is framed by the stance of the reader, whether aesthetic, when “*attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text*” [italics in original], or efferent, when focused on the “information to be acquired” (1978, pp. 23-25).

In addition to these, meaning made by the reader is further shaped by the context in which the reading occurs, when either public, the “denotative, conventional, literal, referential aspects of meaning”, or private, “personal, affective, associational aspects of meaning”, in order to determine where the reading falls on an efferent/aesthetic continuum (Rosenblatt, 1995a).

The Efferent and Aesthetic Stances. When a reader approaches a text, she decides whether it will result in an efferent or aesthetic reading. This is a subconscious decision, or in the case of many classrooms, a decision not made by the reader, but the teacher instead. And even with this, a teacher may wish for her students to approach a text aesthetically, but instead she places efferent-types of parameters within the discussion related to theme, or what can be learned from the text. It may be with the best intentions, but ultimately the efferent stance is the approach. The question arises as to ultimately how do I as a teacher change my teaching paradigm in order to create an environment for true aesthetic responses?

According to Rosenblatt, an efferent reading is primarily focused on what is left after the reading, what is “carried away” (1978, p. 24). She further expands this by describing an efferent reading to be that of extracting the *public* meaning of a text (1982, p. 271). With this reading, attention is oftentimes given to the concepts to be retained, or to the concepts to be tested. The reader is disengaged from personal, qualitative elements and focuses on what the symbols designate regarding the information to be retained. Efferent responses lack the emotional connection to the text, a connection that another stance may offer.

Juxtaposed to this is the aesthetic stance, which is the “lived through” experience when a reader extracts his personal meaning (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 27; 1982, p. 271). I have understood this to be similar to living vicariously through the story, but I question whether this is what Rosenblatt means. She states, “The concept of transaction emphasizes the relationship with, *and continuing awareness of* [italics in the original], the text. During the literary experience, concentration on the words of the text is perhaps even more keen than in an efferent reading” (1978, p. 29). I take this to mean that a true aesthetic reading is one in which the text stays with you, not simply a transaction that lasts only during the reading, but rather it becomes a part of the reader, further impacting subsequent transactions with other texts, thus creating the experience—the poem.

The Poem. The poem is the result of the transaction between the reader and the text, what “happens” during the meeting of the two; however, Rosenblatt stipulates that the poem will only occur if the ‘reader performs in a certain way’, through an aesthetic approach (1995, pgs. xvi, 33). This does not mean that the only purpose of reading is to make personal connections, but rather it is the first step of growth leading towards the ability for deeper reflection so that emotional responses can be expanded (1995, xviii). A reader approaching a text through an aesthetic stance not only allows for the poem to occur, but also allows for the reader to focus more directly on the affective aspects of the reading, helping to provide a “*living through*, not simply *knowledge about* [italics in original]” (1995, p. 38).

It is this experience, the creation of the poem, that I believe a fan fiction writing represents; it is the tangible aesthetic response that illustrates what was important to the reader during that reading, at that time. With different avenues of exploration into

rewriting the story, fanners may negotiate their own meanings of the story through their fan fiction, ultimately demonstrating a critical reading and understanding of the text.

Popular Culture

I see my job in the classroom as a facilitator who is there to help students to find and make connections so that they may become more invested in their learning. The media and the culture of their environment constantly surround students. In class, I find myself battling the decline of the students' writing as they use their text-messaging lingo in their papers, e.g., *ur*, *l8r*, *lol*, as well as their lack of critical thinking skills, as applied to analysis. Lately, I have begun thinking that perhaps I should not worry so much about whether or not my students read *The Odyssey* or *Romeo and Juliet*, but rather I should turn the focus onto items that they find interesting. Perhaps the path to deeper understanding is to find the passion of the students and help them to apply the knowledge to a broader context.

To understand the transaction that occurs between the reader and the text, I must understand the contextual surroundings of the readers in general. With what are they surrounded? Who or what impacts their lives? A term that is often used to answer these questions is *pop culture*. But what is meant by this? Whether using the more informal, colloquial term of *pop culture*, or the more academic version *popular culture*, an explanation of what is meant by the term is needed.

To help further clarify the meaning meant by the term popular culture, John Storey, in his book *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, created six definitions that can be used to illustrate various ways of examining the term. One definition is that popular culture is culture that is well liked by many people, what is

popular. Another is that it is what remains after we have decided what is high culture, leaving this to be a definition of popular culture as a leftover, residual category; whatever is deemed not worthy enough for high culture then falls into this category. Similar to the previous definition, popular culture can also be defined as mass culture; it is commercialized and produced for mass consumption. However, the next definition differs as popular culture is that culture which originates from the people, more as a folk culture; it being a culture for the people, by the people. A more political definition of popular culture refers to Antonio Gramsci and his hegemony theory. Using this approach, popular culture can be seen as a location of struggle between the *resistance* of subordinate groups and the *incorporation* from dominant groups. It is the negotiation between the two where what is deemed popular can change and evolve over time. Storey's sixth definition of popular culture is one that is influenced by postmodern culture that no longer recognizes the distinction between high and popular culture; however, the tensions between commerce and culture remain (2006, pp. 4-9). Although these definitions clearly delineate the different uses of the term, to help understand what is meant by the term popular culture, for the purpose of this study, the best definition is that by noted media scholar Henry Jenkins in his book *Convergence Culture* – popular culture encompasses “cultural materials that have been appropriated and integrated into everyday lives of their consumers” (2007, p. 291).

The breadth of what is popular culture allows for the opportunities to discover what is relevant in the lives of adolescents. Analysis of cultural materials can reveal the implications it has on students, which is necessary for teachers, especially due to the fact that our students are inundated daily with various cultural aspects of society. I believe

that an important question to ask is *why* is something deemed popular. Why is The Hunger Games series popular with readers? Why does it resonate with people? It is imperative that we examine the role of pop culture in the lives of our students, and how we might utilize it in order to help engage and motivate students, while also improving their literacy. I believe that the exploration into fan fiction will allow for this, while also allowing for a deeper look into the nature of readers' responses through the renegotiating of a storyworld.

James Paul Gee and Affinity Spaces

An affinity space can be defined as "a place or set of places where people affiliate with others based primarily on shared activities, interests, and goals, not shared race, class culture, ethnicity, or gender" (Gee, 2004, p. 67). Fan fiction platforms can be seen as affinity spaces, or more specifically portals to *The Hunger Games* affinity space. Whether an academic or fan, readers may enter the affinity space through portals, "anything that gives access to the content and to ways of interacting with that content, by oneself or with other people" (Gee, 2004, p. 74). These portals may be the texts of the novels themselves, along with the movies, or websites dedicated to the story of The Hunger Games. Approaching Fanfiction.net as an affinity space focuses attention on the active participation, the sense of belonging, and the production within the space. Although the goal of this site is mainly to share and read other's fan fiction creations, there is a level of informal learning and collaboration that may also take place. Using feedback from readers, a fan fiction author can revise or edit her work, ultimately helping her to become a better writer. Wishing to continue the story requires a passion. This passion for a topic, often leads people to seek out and find community groups that help

nurture the learning for the topic. In their book, *Women and Gaming: The Sims and 21st Century Learning*, James Paul Gee and Elisabeth Hayes, refer to these groups as *passionate affinity groups* (Gee & Hayes, 2010, p. 106).

The fan fiction community can be considered a passionate affinity group. These communities should be viewed as a portal in which a reader may enter the affinity space of *The Hunger Games*. There are multiple portals that allow fans to enter or continue the storyworld. Whether the portal is to read or write fan fiction based on the series, or to write an article to share with acafans, or to create a video to be uploaded to YouTube, or to create a tribute who will compete in an online version of the games, any fan may enter the encompassing affinity space, where she may meet others who share her interests. A point to ponder in the future though is how to create affinity spaces, whether focused on The Hunger Games or another topic, within a classroom. Outlined in their book, Gee and Hayes describe the various characteristics of passionate affinity groups followed by a comparison to schools, demonstrating how schools are not examples of passionate affinity groups. A further goal of this study is to reevaluate my own teaching so that I may create passionate affinity groups within my own classroom to help enhance students learning.

Henry Jenkins and Participatory Cultures and Transmedia Storytelling

“Transmedia storytelling is the art of world making. To fully experience any fictional world, consumers must assume the role of hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of the story across media channels, comparing notes with each other via online discussion groups, and collaborating to ensure that everyone who invests time and effort will come away with a richer entertainment experience.”

~ Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, p. 21

In *Convergence Culture*, Henry Jenkins writes “a transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable

contribution to the whole” (pp. 95-96). Beginning as a novel series and growing into a movie franchise, The Hunger Games has also made the leap to other media platforms that allow the story to continue in a variety of ways. Whether it is Lionsgate’s own propaganda website maintained as though it is controlled by Panem’s very own Capitol’s Ministry of Information (thecapitol.pn), or Lionsgate’s and Covergirl’s Capitol Collection beauty campaign, the storyworld of Katniss Everdeen has morphed into a pop culture phenomenon, with many different avenues of entry.

In 1992, Henry Jenkins published his classic book on fans and fandoms, *Textual Poachers*, with a revised edition published in 2013. The title relates to an analogy based on Michel De Certeau’s characterization of active reading as *poaching*. Like poachers roaming across someone else’s lands, the analogy illustrates the struggle in the relationship between authors and readers in terms of the *possession* of the text and its meaning (p. 24). The movie, television, and book industries create a text, such as the popular *Star Trek* franchise, and "the text becomes a cultural weapon, a private hunting preserve" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 171). Jenkins further elaborates:

Like the poachers of old, fans operate from a position of marginality and social weakness. Like other popular readers, fans lack direct access to the means of commercial cultural production and have only the most limited resources with which to influence the entertainment industry's decisions. Fans must beg with the networks to keep their favorite shows on the air, must lobby producers to provide desired plot developments, or to protect the integrity of favorite characters. Within the cultural economy, fans are peasants, not proprietors, a recognition which must contextualize our celebration of strategies of popular resistance (2013, p. 27).

Although seemingly powerless within the main infrastructure of the production of the original texts, these fans, these *textual poachers*, have found a way to take the story

and make it their own. Part of the strategy fans use to mold the text to their own needs is the creation of fan fiction.

In 2006, Jenkins and co-authors Ravi Purushotma, Katie Clinton, Margaret Weigel, and Alice Robison published a white paper, *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. In it, Jenkins, et al., define a “participatory culture as one: with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement; with strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations with others; with some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices; where members believe that their contributions matter; where members feel some degree of social connection with one another” (p. 7). Similar to Gee’s notion of an affinity space, Jenkins’s participatory culture can be defined more simply as a “culture in which fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content” (2006, p. 290). Although different in some aspects, both Jenkins and Gee value the nature of a space or culture where people may share their passions, enthusiasms, and expertise with one another, while building a community of like-minded individuals.

Ours is a world where everyone has the opportunity to participate in the telling of stories. We can take media in our own hands in order to produce and create new media. Whether with fan fiction stories, or fan-created videos or websites, in this *participatory culture* everyone is able to participate. Like fan fiction stories being written to share with others, YouTube also has allowed for a platform for people to share their passions as well. Whether a video about applying make-up, or performing difficult acrobatic tricks, people may share their enthusiasms for the world to see.

Review of Research

The following represent relevant research completed in the area of fan fiction, and its use within classrooms. Referencing elements of intertextuality within fan fiction stories, and the collaborative environments available in which fanners may work, as well as learn, together, these researchers all contribute to and support the argument for the use of fan fiction helping to bring important elements of literacy instruction to readers and writers.

With “desires to understand youth culture better and to make school literacy instruction more responsive to learners’ needs”, Kelly Chandler-Olcott and Donna Mahar (2003) conducted an ethnographic inquiry into students’ writing of anime (Japanese Animation)-inspired fan fiction (p. 557). Through their research, they note that their primary participants, two adolescent girls, use their fan fiction writings as ways to “contribute to an ongoing, intertextual conversation about such issues as friendship, loyalty, power, and sexuality” (p. 563). Utilizing a Multiliteracies framework (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), they better viewed fan fiction as texts “influenced by cultural artifacts and social discourses” rather than just stories created by two young girls. Structured within this framework are three useful concepts they used for analysis of the fan fiction stories: multimodality, intertextuality, and hybridity.

Multimodality, the use of multiple modes of media within one text, is evident in the girls’ writings and fan art illustrations. However, this multimodality is not limited to simply the use of various media in one text; it is also evident in the various texts used in order to structure the knowledge base needed to complete their stories. By scaffolding their knowledge through various information outlets, such as websites and television

programs, the girls were able to construct meaning that they then brought to their writing (Chandler-Olcott & Maher, p. 562).

As previously stated, intertextuality is “the relations between texts that occurs when one work refers to or borrows characters, phrases, situations, or ideas from another” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 27). Similar to the knowledge construction through multimodality, intertextuality demonstrates a level of meaning-making visible within the fan fiction stories. Drawing from various stories, as well creating new semi-autobiographical characters, the girls’ fan fiction stories also illustrated attempts to negotiate through societal gender roles and relationships in order to build intertextual connections within their own understandings of society, a process known as hybridity (Chandler-Olcott & Maher, p. 563).

This hybridity showcases how various discourses and genres are blended together within the stories in order to allow the girls room to negotiate their sense of identity evidenced within their fan fiction, while also allowing them the opportunity to structure their work in various fashions (p. 563). Unlike traditional English instruction of story writing – beginning, middle, end – the fan fictions were often times structured in similar fashions to the television shows, with an understanding of what had occurred previously assumed by the writers. This is a significant difference from what is typically expected within conventional classrooms, where a shared understanding cannot be presumed, marking fan fiction as a genre that can be used to engage students, but not as one that is recommended to be used as a formal genre for all students (p. 564).

Although Chandler-Olcott and Maher recognize fan fiction as texts to be considered by teachers for “diagnostic purposes in order to get a sense of what

individuals can do as readers and writers, as well as what they value” (p. 564), they question whether incorporating fan fiction into classrooms will cause it to lose its appeal by co-opting it for educational use (p. 564); a question worthy of investigation within my own line of research.

Also focused on online fan fiction, Angela Thomas explores the writing practices fans use to role-play and create fan fiction works within the web-based community forum of *Middle Earth Insanity* (2006) through the observation of two female participants. Thomas makes note of the collaborative writing process utilized by these two as they role-play various story arcs and use an Instant Messenger feature in order to brainstorm ideas before turning them into transformative, publishable fan fiction texts. Through this process they demonstrate mastery of a “range of literary techniques in their writing, drawing upon intertextual references from literature, media, and personal experiences” (pp. 232-233).

Thomas argues that fan fiction offers a means for critical responses to texts, as fans are able to explore issues of gender and sexuality through the writing process. Fan fiction writing as a type of response that allows for a critical look at salient topics in the everyday lives of the writers, helps them to express themselves without the fear of stigma or negativity as they negotiate their sense of identity. These fan fiction communities offer spaces where “hybrid textualities” include responses to various types of reading, critical analyses of texts, and collaborative writing opportunities, creating a culture that values the story (p. 237).

Rebecca Black, in her three-year case study of three adolescent English language learners (ELLs), researched their learning, literacy, and social practices demonstrated

through their engagement and interactions in the creation of fan fiction (2008). By situating Fanfiction.net as an affinity space, Black described “how certain paradigmatic features of affinity spaces affect youths’ access to and levels of affiliation with literacy activities” (p. xiv), arguing that sites such as these provide a more encouraging space for students to develop language skills. Through an empirical analysis of the ELLs’ participation in the fan fiction community, Black focused on the identities represented, as well as their literacy development, with an “inquiry into the ways in which many fannish activities are aligned with or have the potential to inform school-based literacy practices” (p. 21).

Submersing herself as an active participant in the Fanfiction.net community, Black posted her own fan fiction writings for others to comment upon (p. 22), while also opening up avenues of communication with participants. Through a discourse analysis methodology, the focus of research was on the girls’ fan fiction writings, but there was also a focus on the Author’s Notes and Reviews – both to their own stories, as well as to those to which they reviewed – as these help to shape the girls’ identities and online socialization.

Extremely helpful for educators is the final chapter regarding the changing nature of literacy instruction within school. Black notes that as we progress further into the twenty-first century, with a more networked society, our pedagogical practices will need to evolve (p. 122). Similar to Gee and Hayes (2010) work concerning Passionate Affinity Groups and schooling, Black also delineates the differences between online fan fiction sites and school writing spaces, arguing for more authentic types of writing and social interaction between peers. By analyzing the literacy practices evident in fan fiction

writings and participation in these online communities, educators may more easily understand and appreciate these out-of-school practices in order to foster growth within our own classrooms.

Similar to the preceding, is that completed by Jen Scott Curwood (2013) concerning *The Hunger Games* and online affinity spaces, outlined in her article “*The Hunger Games: Literature, Literacy, and Online Affinity Spaces*”. In an ethnographic online study of affinity spaces related specifically to *The Hunger Games*, Curwood focuses on Jake’s, a 13-year-old boy’s, literacy practices across various online platforms in order to observe how his interactions within these portals to *The Hunger Games* affinity space promotes critical engagement with the literature (p. 417). Through his actions within the portals of Mockingjay, Panem October, and Panemonium, Jake demonstrates an ongoing, active engagement with the literature, which Curwood uses to support three guiding principles that she offers to help teacher’s pedagogical decisions regarding literature and technology (p. 422):

1. “Online affinity spaces offer multiple ways in which young people can engage with literature.”
2. “Young people value text selections and multi-genre responses to literature.”
3. “Media paratexts, or parallel texts, extend and enhance young adults experience with literature.”

With her research examples to support each of these principles, Curwood supports her argument that the engagement within these sites helps to shape young adults’ literacy development by allowing for many avenues of participation (p. 425). The case is made for reinventing the nature of literature in schools and the approach that is taken to

motivate and engage students. With teachers becoming more aware of the benefits that these interactions bring to readers, the goal becomes that we “provide them with entry points into the curriculum, much like portals serve as entry points to an online affinity space” (p. 426).

While these preceding examples all relate to literacies and online affinity spaces, whether that of *The Hunger Games* or of Fanfiction.net, the resounding nature of all are on the participants and their actions and responses, not simply on the responses themselves, validating the need for further research into the critical analysis of what fan fiction writing can illustrate about a readers response to literature.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Approach and Rationale

Since its publication in 2008, much has been written about the worldwide bestseller *The Hunger Games*. Not only does the novel include two sequels, but it also includes a total of four movies that will cover the trilogy. In addition, it has become a popular novel for use in many middle and high school classrooms, as well as being the topic for the creation of thousands of fan fiction stories. The question arises though as to how these two uses, entertainment and academia, coincide, if they do at all.

As a high school English teacher, I try to incorporate engaging novels and stories into my classroom in order to help pull my students into the storyworlds that we will be exploring. I have used many different popular young adult novels in order to help students make better connections to the stories. Whether they are novels of teen angst and struggles, such as those found in *You Don't Know Me* (Klass, 2001) or *The Outsiders* (Hinton, 1967), or historical novels based on dark times in American history, such as *Mississippi Trial, 1955* (Crowe, 2002) or *Superman Versus the Ku Klux Klan* (Bowers, 2012), the underlying goal is to choose novels which students can engage with or relate to on some level. I have used *The Hunger Games* before, but it has not been until recently that I have begun to question how the importance I see of the novel connects to what the students see as important.

Needed was a way of studying the phenomena of the fan fiction fandom of The Hunger Games: the texts produced by fans and the relationship between the varying storyworlds, in a concise manner. To achieve this so as to fully understand the fandom, both the text and film adaptations needed to be included as it is difficult to distinguish

between the two in fan fiction. The Hunger Games' storyworlds include: the published storyworld – the three original novels and the accompanying movies – and the transmedia storyworld – the fandom found within the site of Fanfiction.net. The intent of this study was to explore the meaning made by fanners, by analyzing and comparing their written stories to my own thoughts and beliefs concerning the texts of The Hunger Games.

Through this study, I now more clearly understand how the fan fiction writers, fanners, either extended or refuted the themes and issues raised within academic uses by focusing on the main research question of – What is the nature of responses to The Hunger Games in online fan fiction stories?

The focus was on the texts themselves, rather than on the readers of The Hunger Games who then become fan fiction writers. It was important to focus on the texts, the fan fiction stories, as the readers' responses to literature so that I could understand the sense-making practices of the reader as demonstrated within the fan fiction creation. Typically, when interviewing fan fiction writers, another body of texts to analyze is created, which do not produce a reality of the writers' sense-making practices, but rather a representation of reality (McKee, 2003, p. 84). The careful focus and analysis of the fan fiction stories as responses to literature helped to illuminate *what is textually evident from the readers as important* in the story. The intent of this study was to explore the meaning demonstrated by fanners, through a careful analysis of their fan fiction responses.

Textual Analysis

This study was a study of texts as representations of response through the review and analysis of selected fan fiction stories based on The Hunger Games. The Hunger Games began as a written text, a novel. Through its popularity, it has grown to now

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encompass movies, websites, YouTube videos, Cosplay, and fan fiction, all of which are still *texts*, things from which we make meaning (McKee, p.4); however, a “text is not simply the inked marks on the page or even the uttered vibrations in the air...signs become verbal symbols, become words, by virtue of their being potentially recognizable...in a reading situation ‘the text’ may be thought of as the printed signs in their capacity to serve as symbols” (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 12). Beginning as a story of words on a page, the story has transcended through other various forms of media, allowing fans to *read* the story in a variety of ways. The fan or reader, in this case the fanner, is who brings life to the work, as she “carries on a dynamic, personal, and unique activity” with the text (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 15). This in turn allows the story to have two functions: it acts as a stimulus which activates elements of the reader’s past experience with literature as well as with life, and it serves as a guide for what will be held in the forefront of the reader’s attention (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 11). To understand how readers made sense of the storyworld of The Hunger Games, a multi-faceted approach to the analyses of all of the texts was required.

A Textual Analysis Study is a way of making an educated guess at some of the likely interpretations of a text; a data-gathering process to use to understand the ways in which various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are (McKee, 2003, p. 1). This was done by reading the fan fiction stories and identifying the major themes and recurring elements. More specifically, the approach better suited to this study was that of a Post-structuralist Textual Analysis, which helped me to understand the ways in which representations took place, the assumptions behind them, and the kinds of sense-making practices about the world that the fan fiction stories revealed, since different ways of

thinking about the world are equally valid (McKee, 2003, pp. 17, 52). In order to recognize the value of the responses themselves, I had to first understand the contextual world related to The Hunger Games, i.e., what academics and fans had written about it, as well as the nature of the fan fiction environments that fanners join, i.e., the characteristics of fan fiction and fandoms.

Interpretations are simply educated guesses based on our knowledge of relevant intertexts; the same ones readers have on hand when they also interpret a text. My role as an English teacher helped to frame my interpretations of The Hunger Games. To enhance my understanding of these texts in order to better structure my analysis, I supported my interpretations with four categories outlined by McKee in his book *Textual Analysis* (2003, pp. 92-100). The four categories were by no means exhaustive, but they provided a suitable framework for describing the world of intertexts surrounding The Hunger Games. These categories included: other texts in the series (the books, as well as the films), the text genre (dystopian and young adult literature [YAL]), intertexts about the text itself (the academic discourses surrounding the texts), and the public context in which the text is circulated (the discourses surrounding the world of fan fiction and the stories themselves). These texts not only acted as frameworks to frame my analysis of the stories, but they also served as both a literature review and points of data for analysis.

Texts in the Series: The Hunger Games Storyworld.

“It's funny, because even though they're rattling on about the Games, it's all about where they were or what they were doing or how they felt when a specific event occurred. . . . Everything is about them, not the dying boys and girls in the arena.”

~ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*, pp. 353-354

A world with 12 districts, rather than 50 states. A world where districts are isolated from one another. A world where citizens are reminded of the Capitol's control

by having to sacrifice two children to compete in fight-to-the-death gladiatorial games yearly. An event known as The Hunger Games.

The first in the trilogy, *The Hunger Games* is set in a futuristic land of the former United States. The citizens of Panem are now divided into 13 districts. Due to a rebellion against the Capitol, District Thirteen has been destroyed, and the remaining districts are required to send one boy and one girl, between twelve and seventeen-years-old, to the Capitol to compete in the annual Hunger Games. Kept isolated from one another, the districts are kept under guard, producing the needed resources for the country. To save her sister from entering the games, Katniss Everdeen, along with her companion Peeta Mellark, enter the games and begin the fight for their own survival. It isn't until they enter the 74th Hunger Games that many of the citizens of Panem begin to understand that there is hope to be found in bringing down the Capitol.

Reeling from their survival of the games, Katniss, known now as the girl on fire, and Peeta find themselves thrust into the spotlight once again in book two of the series *Catching Fire*. Katniss and Peeta's threat of their suicides with a handful of berries is seen as a survival technique by some, but others, including Panem's President Snow, see it as an act of rebellion, as a challenge to the authority of rules of the Capitol. While sent into the games once again, Katniss's journey moves from not just that of her own fight for survival, but to the survival of others as well. As she witnesses the effects of the Capitol's control on the other districts, she realizes that she has unwittingly become the symbol of survival, the symbol of the rebellion, to the nation. She has become the Mockingjay.

The conclusion of the series, *Mockingjay*, tells the story of Katniss coming to terms with her role within the rebellion, as she begins to understand that the line between good and evil or what is right and what is wrong is not always clear. As she is faced with difficult decisions and heartrending losses, she must decide what is right, not only for herself, but for others as well.

Perhaps due to Collins's work with writing for television, each novel unfolds like acts in a play. Each is divided into three parts, with each part consisting of nine chapters. Each part reflects an aspect of the story, whether it is the exposition or beginning actions, the crisis or rising action, or the climatic resolution or denouement. With the narrator of the story being Katniss herself, readers experience the events when and as Katniss does, allowing a closeness to develop with the character. Through Katniss's eyes, readers must rely on the details found within the atmosphere, the dialogue, and the descriptions used to represent the other characters.

Compared to the books, the movies remain true to the essential themes of the overall story: the negotiation of identity, the blurred lines between right and wrong, facing injustices. As with any book-to-film adaptation, changes are made in order to heighten suspense and drama; the film adaptations of The Hunger Games series are no exceptions. While there are many minor changes in the films that help to move the story forward, there are a few of significant importance.

Because of the point of view of the novels, readers are only allowed Katniss's perspective of events. The films attempt to fill in additional details of what is occurring outside of Katniss's small world around her. Due to this, many characters are provided with more development, like President Snow. A somewhat minor character in the first

book, viewers are given more details concerning his thoughts of the games, as well as of Katniss, in the films. While many of his film scenes are not present in the novels, these scenes do help to add to the backstory of the Capitol and to President Snow's concerns of Katniss's growing popularity. These scenes allow for conversations between him and the gamemakers, Seneca Crane and Plutarch Heavensbee, regarding the games and Katniss's much needed death to forestall the rebellion. President Snow's added scenes also allow for the inclusion of his granddaughter, who idolizes Katniss, demonstrating that even those closest to him are drawn in by the mockingjay.

In addition to added scenes concerning characters, there are also scenes that show what is happening in the districts outside of Katniss's perspective. Most of these concern uprisings in result of the games or of a Capitol directive. One such added scene follows the death of Rue. Immediately after Katniss covers Rue with flowers, she directs her attention at the camera and touches her three middle fingers to her lips and then raises them in salute, the same gesture that was given to her by her own district. In the novel, this gesture is used by District Twelve to mean thanks, admiration, or saying good-bye to someone you love (Collins, 2008, p. 24). This gesture is repeated many times throughout the novels and films as a demonstration of solidarity between people. Once Katniss gives this salute, the perspective of the film changes to District Eleven where they also have returned the salute to an unseeing Katniss. Immediately after, the district erupts in chaos as the citizens overtake the peacekeepers. Although the revolt is short lived, the added scene provides viewers with the sparks that are spreading due to the girl on fire's actions.

The origin of the mockingjay pin in the film is another departure from the novel, thus impacting the role of the pin as well as the mockingjay symbol throughout all of the

films. In the first book of the series, after the reaping, Katniss receives a visit from Madge Undersee, District Twelve's mayor's daughter, as she waits to be taken to the Capitol. Madge's sole reason for the visit is to give Katniss her mockingjay pin to wear as a token from her district. As an unexpected visitor, Katniss is taken aback by Madge's gift of the mockingjay pin, and doesn't understand the urgency and insistent nature of Madge's request to wear it in the arena. She agrees to it, but promptly forgets about it until Cinna produces it again for her immediately before beginning the games. The film changes this introduction by Katniss finding the pin while in the Hob in District Twelve on the morning of the reaping. When she asks how much it is, the old woman gifts it to her. Katniss then takes it home to present to Prim as a token of good luck to wear. Then, rather than Madge giving her the pin, Prim returns it to Katniss for good luck during the games.

Although the origin of the pin may seem trivial, it is important in two ways. Madge is a minor character throughout the story; however, it is she that introduces the importance of the symbol of the mockingjay. Mockingjays are the species of bird that resulted from the Capitol's failed attempt to genetically create Jabberjays, male birds that would eavesdrop and memorize entire conversations in order to then report back to Capitol. Once the district realized what the Capitol was doing, they began feeding the birds useless information. Recognizing its failure, the Capitol abandoned the birds believing them to simply become extinct. Instead, they mated with mockingbirds, creating the species of the mockingjay, a bird that can mimic human melodies. As a symbol, these birds came to represent the Capitol's failure to foresee a species' ability to adapt and survive. As the mayor's daughter, Madge may be privy to the symbolic

relevance of the mockingjay, supporting her insistence that Katniss wear it, or she may be aware of resistance to the Capitol, leading readers to believe that a rebellion was brewing and Katniss was simply the spark that lit the fire. It is later mentioned in the novels that the pin belonged to Madge's aunt, Maysilee Donner, a friend of Katniss's mother, as well as tribute and ally during the same games as Haymitch Abernathy, Katniss's mentor. Whether intentional or not, Madge's gift of the pin brings the symbol of the mockingjay to the forefront of the story.

Madge is also important as a character that delineates fan fiction stories between those written with the inspiration of the novels, and those with the inspiration of the films. With stories including her, it is evident that the fan has read the novels. In many of the stories featuring Madge, her character allows for another female to rival Katniss's attention from either Gale or Peeta. This allows for another layer of tension to be added to the story regarding the relationships between characters.

A missing motif from the films is bread. Throughout the novels, Collins incorporates bread in various ways from symbolizing the relationship between Katniss and Peeta to using it as a way of communicating the day and time of the escape in *Catching Fire*. Bread becomes a literal symbol of the rebellion with the imprint of the mockingjay baked into loaves, illustrating that they are on the same side as Katniss. Absent from the films are the direct connections to the Latin *panem et circenses*, *bread and games*. While this is explained in *Mockingjay*, the movies lack explanations or details concerning the bonds between hunger within the districts translated into bread.

The Hunger Games series can be identified with many different labels. Young adult literature. Bestseller. Dystopian. Societal critique. Bildungsroman. Whichever label

is chosen, the fact remains that Collins wrote a series that resonates with readers in one way or another. Whether intrigued by the developing love story between the characters, or with the survival aspects of the games, or perhaps with the juxtaposition of the wealth of the Capitol to the meager existence of those in the outer districts, readers can make connections on many different levels with the story. Mixing elements of war, reality television, and a strong female protagonist, Collins created a national bestselling series told from the point of view of a seventeen-year-old girl who unwittingly becomes the symbol of a revolution, when all she wanted to do was to save her sister.

The Text Genre: Dystopian Literature. McKee defines genre as a categorization “providing conventions which allow efficient communication between producers and audiences” (2003, p.95). Throughout this study, I will utilize the term genre in such a way as to describe the understood rules related to the terms that help readers to make “reasonable guesses at how a text is likely to be read by audiences” (McKee, 2003, p. 95).

During the early 20th century, as a response to ongoing world events such as World War I and World War II, the concept of dystopian societies made their way into popular literature (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013, p. 11). From early novels like *Brave New World* (Huxley, 1932/2006) to *Nineteen Eighty-four* (Orwell, 1949/1989) to *Fahrenheit 451* (Bradbury, 1953/2012), literary dystopian societies became a way of countering fictional utopias, a critique of the utopian ideals. Often times, these dystopic, futuristic societies were “constructed to allay the ills that pervade our present, such as poverty and overpopulation” (Hill, 2012, p. 101). Often seen as subversive, dystopian literature illustrates how society may change for the better, and in the case of young adult

dystopias, this change often comes as the result of a teenager's actions. Walk through any bookstore's teen section, and a variety of dystopian young adult literature can be found.

Whether looking for a novel depicting a post-apocalyptic scenario similar to that in *Blood Red Road* (Young, 2011), or one that describes teenagers being used as science experiments like in *The Maze Runner* (Dashner, 2009), there is a plethora of books to be found.

Dystopian literature allows the characters, and thus the readers, to question society, as well as their role within it. Offering a sense of personal agency, "the capability to initiate and direct one's action for specific purposes" (Hill, 2012, p. 102), these novels illustrate the actions of individuals who have a will and an ability to disagree with societal opinions, while also acting against them. This allows readers who may feel powerless in their lives to better understand the role of a societal savior who allows changes to be made, which in turn, saves the world.

Many dystopian novels include common elements and motifs outlined by Scholes and Ostenson (2013) in their article "Understanding the Appeal of Dystopian Young Adult Fiction" (p. 11). These elements include: excessive measures to police society as seen in Patrick Ness's *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (2008); media manipulation and propaganda similar to Cory Doctorow's post 9/11 society in *Little Brother* (2008); a lack of individual freedom such as that experienced by teenagers in Neal Shusterman's *Unwind* (2007); the division of people in *Across the Universe* by Beth Revis (2011); and economic manipulation seen in *Starters* by Lissa Price (2012) – all of which are also present in *The Hunger Games*.

Ultimately, dystopian novels offer a discourse of hope for society. While wrestling with deeper moral issues, this literature provides readers with a framework for better understanding their own place within the world, as well as their abilities to change the future for the better. When reading the fan fiction creations based on the series, I noted the different dystopian elements and themes based on those found by Scholes and Ostenson that fanners had included within their creations. A question I had concerned whether fanners included these different elements because they were found in the original, or whether they included new elements, expanding the dystopia. From my findings, I came to the conclusion that fanners actually abandon the dystopian aspects in order to focus more on the relationships between characters. They tend to accept Collins's dystopian world as it is.

Intertexts about the Text: The Academic Discourses Surrounding the Texts.

As a secondary English teacher, I have come across many different articles pertaining to The Hunger Games, especially articles concerning its literary value and its possible use in classrooms. Having read the novel before with my classes, I am familiar with aspects of its use within classrooms, in addition to utilizing some of the techniques and themes that many academics have referenced.

During the Popular Culture/America Culture Association's 2014 Conference, "Yesterday, Tomorrow, and Today", I had purchased *Of Bread, Blood and The Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy* and *Approaching The Hunger Games Trilogy: A Literary and Cultural Analysis*. Both books are extremely helpful critical analyses of varying aspects of The Hunger Games, and have broadened my own understandings of the series.

As a result of the popularity of The Hunger Games, numerous academic articles and essays have been written. In each book, the authors of the articles have read The Hunger Games series and have found different aspects of importance within the story; just as with any reading of a novel, each reader will resonate with different aspects of the story. These essays help build an understanding of the thematic trends emerging throughout the story, quite similar to the process of Scholes and Ostenson's found in their research concerning dystopian novels.

The Public Context in which the Text is Circulated: Fan Fiction and Fandom Discourses.

“Fan fiction is what literature might look like if it were reinvented from scratch after a nuclear apocalypse by a band of brilliant pop-culture junkies trapped in a sealed bunker. They don't do it for money. That's not what it's about. The writers write it and put it up online just for the satisfaction. They're fans, but they're not silent, couchbound consumers of media. The culture talks to them, and they talk back to the culture in its own language.”

~ Lev Grossman, author, *The Magicians*
TIME, July 7, 2011

Fan fiction can be traced to the Holmesian pastiche of the late nineteenth century, if not further back to the oral storytellings of mythological heroes found within the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. One may also look no further than *Romeo and Juliet* to find a retelling of the ill-fated love story of Pyramus and Thisbe to the hero of Beowulf to see the beginnings of our archetypal superheroes or to the TV popularization of *Star Trek* and the fan community that it created. Whichever perspective is chosen, from the sharing of oral stories to the creation of communities of fans sharing the same passions, one common element is found within all – fans sharing their passions and enthusiasms for the original work through the creation of new texts.

Fan fiction allows for differing perspectives and interpretations that may continue the story. Whereas it may be overlooked as simplistic writing at times, it must be noted that to continue an already existing story, the writer must rely on the knowledge of the already existing text, involving in-depth reading and understanding of it, as well as knowledge of the fandom; both being woven into a new story based on the original. Reflecting on Rosenblatt's efferent-aesthetic continuum, it can be seen how readers enter a reading both efferently and aesthetically. Their knowledge of the original story requires an efferent reading, attention given to the events occurring in the story, whereas their fan fiction response represents their aesthetic entrance into the storyworld, making it more of their own.

When reading fan fiction, one must be familiar with the discourses utilized to describe the story, as well as with the self-motivated fan communities, the fandom. Without a basic understanding of this, it may be confusing for a novice reader to appreciate the writer's recreation of the original story. The *fandom* of any show, movie, book, or game includes the activities, canon, characters, and fan fiction. Whereas a *canon* encompasses all of the events which expressly happen within the fandom, a *fanon* includes aspects of the original that are not strictly canon, but do not contradict it, allowing others to adopt it as a part of the accepted storyworld (Pugh, 2005, p. 242). Many elements within a *fanon* are often widely accepted by most fans due to overwhelming popularity.

In her book *The Democratic Genre: Fan Fiction in a Literary Context*, Sheenagh Pugh outlines helpful definitions commonly used in fan fiction for the novice reader. Fan fiction writers will often include an "Author's Notes" section, using the following

culturally accepted fan fiction terms to let readers know its relation to the original, as well as what they may expect from their story. When labeled as an alternate universe [AU] setting, the writer chooses to stray from the canon, the original published and marketed storyworld of the original, and create events that are on their own timeline or setting. Or the writer may choose to combine two or more of their favorite fandoms into one story, known as a crossover (Xover), incorporating multiple characters, events, places, and ideas from each original. While a writer may choose to not set the story in an AU, she may choose instead to focus on a particular aspect of the original for her fan fiction piece. It may be labeled as a genfic, containing no sexual situations, or it could be a hurt/comfort (h/c), where a character is intentionally traumatized in order to be comforted by another. Extending past this is slash fiction that creates a homosexual relationship, depicting the characters in relationships that differ from the original, such as the popular Harry Potter and Draco Malfoy pairings. Stories that simply imply a homosexual relationship are given the label of pre-slash. Notations for slash fanfic may be seen as (F/F) for female slash, or (M/M) for male slash. Not all fan fiction stories are serious or in-depth though. Some stories are simply *sillyfic*, including ridiculous scenarios meant to amuse, or it may be a *one-shot*, expanding on a scene or implied scene from the original, allowing for different perspectives or more details. Whichever changes or elaborations are made, it is worth studying these responses to better understand how they represent the readers' engagement within the storyworlds (2005, pp. 242-244).

Data Collection

This study was a study of texts as representations of response – fan fiction stories based on The Hunger Games – framed by my own interpretations and understandings of

the larger environments, novels, movies, fanon, popularity, and literary criticism. Fanners invested time and creative energy into their fan fiction creations, and through this they challenged the boundaries of the storyworld by adding their own desires to the story. To achieve this, they demonstrated how they, as readers and fans, had carefully analyzed the original story, similar to the way an academic may analyze a Shakespearean text (Sullivan, 2012, p. 210).

The most important aspect of research was the collection of data. With regards to my specific research question – What can fan fiction tell us about the response to literature? – my data consisted of my close readings, musings, and thoughts concerning the Hunger Games compared to my analysis of the fan fiction stories (responses to the storyworld written by fanners). These two categories of data provided a larger perspective of the various views of The Hunger Games trilogy, found through fans and academics alike. As previously stated, this data was also part of a literature review that helped to frame my analysis of the fan fiction responses, based on McKee's four categories used to support interpretation: other texts in the series, the text genre, intertexts about the text itself, and the public context in which the text is circulated (2003, pp. 92-100).

Since the main aspect of my research focused on the responses to The Hunger Games as texts found through the Fanfiction.net portal, I needed to document my searches for stories, as well as for articles. Also, due to the transient nature of the Internet, it was important that I saved each of the stories electronically to ensure their availability for future reference. I needed to make everything crystal clear, for others as well as for myself, regarding my data collection.

Selection of Stories

Because this study was about online environments of The Hunger Games digital fandoms, specifically fan fiction stories, the research was focused on a specific online platform in order to apply the same filters for identifying all fan fiction stories to analyze. To facilitate this, I only utilized the website of Fanfiction.net in order to search for and find fan fiction stories related to the storyworld of The Hunger Games. Since fans may upload their stories at anytime and also remove them at anytime, I saved each as a PDF, to my internal computer hard-drive, so that I would have an accurate record of the story, as well as when it was accessed. I also made note of any filters I used within the platform in order to better find stories that fit my criteria: completed, genre, length, etc. By maintaining accurate recordings of searches – words, phrases, dates, times – it allows for someone else to possibly follow my footsteps.

I decided upon using Fanfiction.net due to easier navigation and the fact that a visitor does not need to be a member of the site to read and comment on the stories. The openness of the site allows for visitors to peruse the stories without needing to create an account. One may choose to do so if wishing to upload a story, but it is not necessary for simply reading. I believe this is important because it underscores the fact that fanners choose to share their stories with the world through an online platform that anyone may visit.

Currently the number of The Hunger Games fan fiction stories found on Fanfiction.net is approximately 44,400 stories (April 12, 2016), demonstrating the popularity of the series, as well as the growing number of fans submitting their stories online in order to share with others. Although the willingness to share stories online is to

be celebrated, it poses a difficulty for a researcher wanting to make note of the stories as research data when the fan fiction world itself is constantly growing. The staggering amount of fan fiction required me to limit the platform from which I gathered the stories to Fanfiction.net. In addition, I also utilized the internal filters within the site in order to streamline the collection process.

Fanfiction.net contains a filtering system so that stories can be selected by the parameters that I set forth. Through the filters, a reader can decide how to sort the stories, based on the update or publish date, the number of reviews or follows, as well as by how many fans have labeled the story as a favorite. The genre, the rating, the number of words, the language, and whether or not the story is complete may further filter stories. A reader may also decide to filter the stories based on the characters included if she so wishes.

In Rebecca Black's research on adolescents and fan fiction (2008), she analyzed not only the fan fiction stories themselves, but also the *Headers* and *Author's Notes* that are often used to help readers identify pertinent characteristics of the story. Used as the beginning section of a story, *Headers* allow readers to glean information, such as any spoilers, the genre, characters, and the rating. *Author's Notes* allow for the story's author to communicate directly with the reading audience, to include information about herself, and/or any requests for suggestions for the story. The Headers helped me to conceptualize the genre of the story, as well as it provided the pertinent information regarding its logistics found within the filtering, e.g., length, completed status, involved characters, etc. In addition to these two fan fiction additions, readers may also post their own thoughts on the story, known as the reviews. Using these additional aspects, Black

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analyzed fan fiction for recurrent themes and structural characteristics, helping her to “create a broad typology of meaning-making and information exchange” (p. 28).

Although my research was not focused on the actual comments on or reviews of the stories from the author and readers, I believed that saving these reviews and *Author’s Notes* was important to do as I saved the stories, so that if needed later, I will have the data readily available. Whether or not a story has had reviews posted is another aspect for delineating the stories throughout the Fanfiction.net filters, so I incorporated this into my selection of stories as well. Though, again, I did not use the reviews and *Author’s Notes* as points of data within the research.

After reviewing the filters, I decided to base my choice of stories using the following parameters. First, I located the stories related to The Hunger Games through the homepage of Fanfiction.net, which was found by clicking on the Books category (Figure 1). Once to the listing of books, I selected The Hunger Games (Figure 2) in order to proceed sorting the stories through the following filters.

Figure 1. Fanfiction.net Home Page.

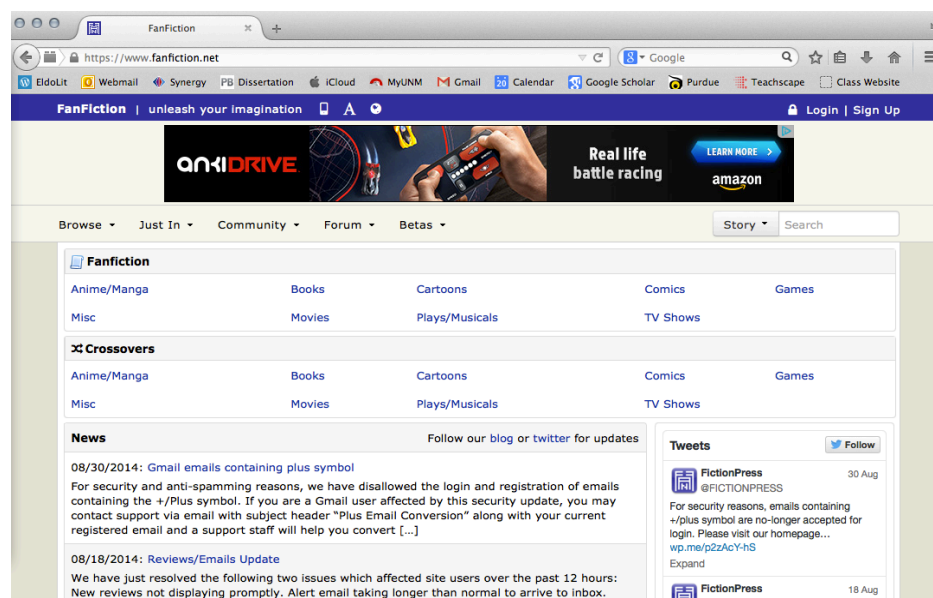
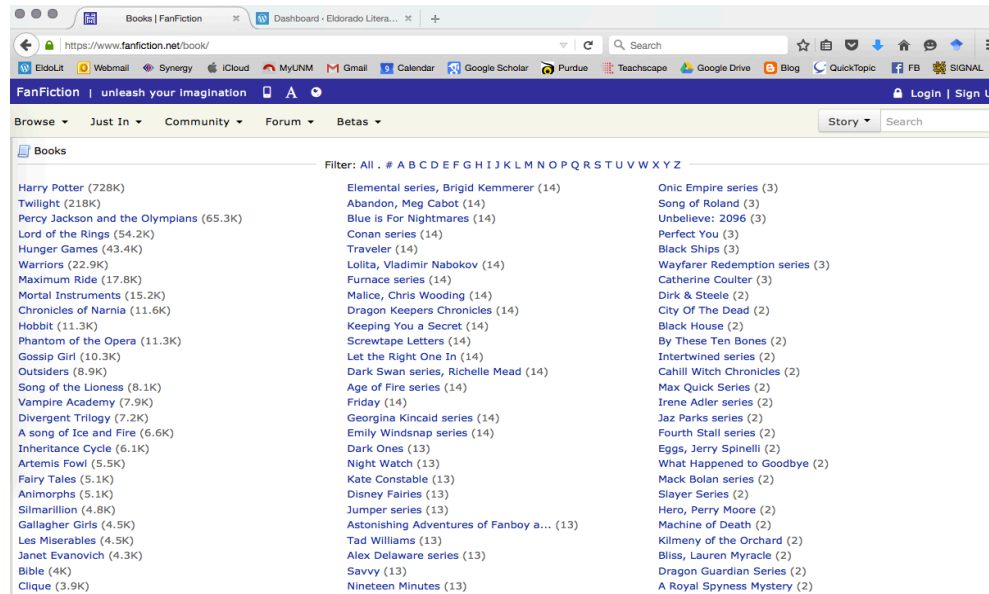


Figure 2. Fanfiction.net List of Book Fandoms.

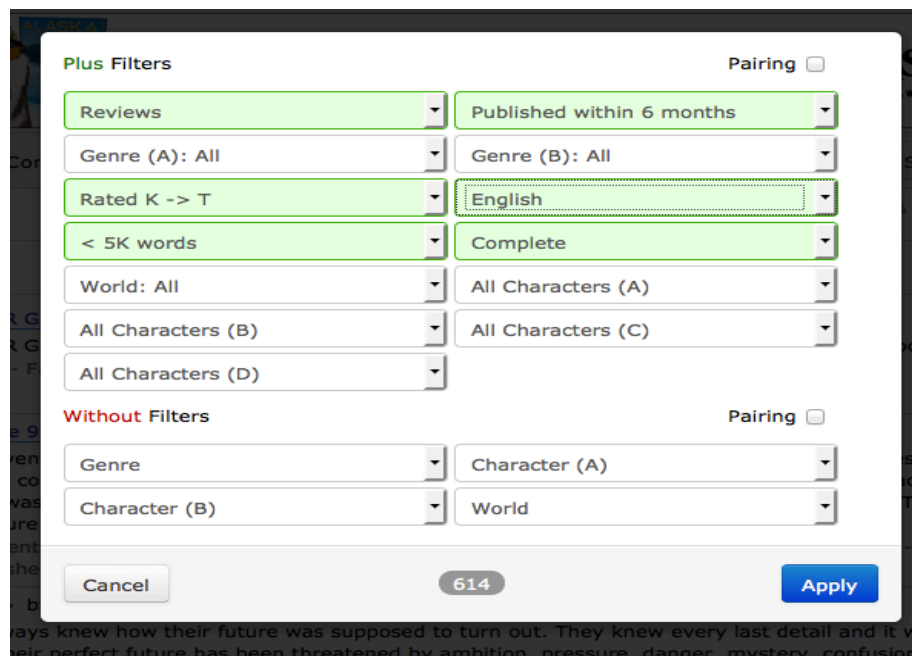


To narrow the selection of fan fiction stories, I enlisted the parameters utilized within the site (Figure 3). Because there are 21 different genres listed, I chose to include all genres rather than choosing a specific one. This allowed for some diversity within the stories collected. With a similar reason, I did not delegate certain characters as parameters. I felt as though allowing all different characters opened up the variety of stories, allowing me to see which characters fanners decided to use within their creations.

Fanfiction.net sets guidelines for the ratings of stories. Similar to movie ratings, the author must label her story with a specific rating. The ratings may range from K (suitable for children) to K+ (some content not suitable for children) to T (suitable for children 13 and older) to M (not suitable for teens and children under the age of 16, and may include explicit material) (<https://www.Fanfiction.net/guidelines/>, June 23, 2014). I chose to filter stories by including all those that are rated K-T because the filtering of choices allowed for all stories rated K-T to be listed, rather than filtering through each specific rating.

Lastly, the stories were categorized by those published within the last six months that were shorter than 5,000 words, and that were also complete. The publishable time was significant as it connected to the release of the last movie in the series, the published storyworld. As with any novel to film adaptation, changes are made. Keeping note the time frame of published stories in relation to the films helped me to analyze any changes that were made within the fan fiction story concerning variations in events and/or characters. When filtering for length, the stories ranged in length from 1,026 words to 4,738 words. In order to have a wide-breadth of stories, I chose fifteen different stories, which were longer than 1,000 words and shorter than 5,000. There were multiple stories by the same authors, and I included them as they represent the tops stories through the utilized filter. It also provided another layer of analysis when looking at multiple fan fiction stories written by the same author. As a result of the publishing date, I filtered and chose the fifteen fan fiction stories on Thursday, August 6, 2015.

Figure 3. Fanfiction.net Filtering Page.



The image shows a screenshot of the Fanfiction.net filtering interface. It features two main sections: "Plus Filters" and "Without Filters".

Plus Filters (with a "Pairing" checkbox):

- Reviews (dropdown)
- Published within 6 months (dropdown)
- Genre (A): All (dropdown)
- Genre (B): All (dropdown)
- Rated K -> T (dropdown)
- English (dropdown)
- < 5K words (dropdown)
- Complete (dropdown)
- World: All (dropdown)
- All Characters (A) (dropdown)
- All Characters (B) (dropdown)
- All Characters (C) (dropdown)
- All Characters (D) (dropdown)

Without Filters (with a "Pairing" checkbox):

- Genre (dropdown)
- Character (A) (dropdown)
- Character (B) (dropdown)
- World (dropdown)

At the bottom, there is a "Cancel" button, a page number "614", and an "Apply" button.

After an initial canvas of fan fiction stories, I determined that fifteen samples were an adequate sampling of stories, as well as a manageable set of data. The variances among the quality of writing, characters, and genres did not significantly increase outside a sample larger than this. The chosen data provided me with a large array of diverse fan fiction stories to analyze.

Although the process was time-consuming, the gratification came from being able to better understand the nature of a fan fiction story as an example of a true response created by someone who wished to continue living within the storyworld.

Fan Fiction Stories in Alphabetical Order. The following stories are listed in alphabetical order, complete with author name, the Fanfiction.net rating, genre as listed by the author, characters included, number of words, and summary as provided by the author. Any mistakes were made by the fan fiction author, and to maintain the authenticity of their writing, I did not make any grammatical, mechanical, spelling changes.

1. "As Soon As I Can"

Author: wouldratherbeaunicorn

Summary: "Hello?" Peeta answered the phone. He had calmed himself down after the goodbye, and was now sitting in the den, drinking orange juice. "Peeta? I'm calling to say goodbye."

Characters: Katniss E., Peeta M.

Rating: Fiction T

Genre: Romance/Tragedy

Word Length: 1,026

Published: Jun 23

2. "Cookie Crumbs"

Author: VictoriaAntoine

Summary: "A girl in the Capitol watches the Hunger Games with her mother."

Characters: Effie

Rated: T

Genre: Drama

Words: 1,381

Published: Feb 26

3. "Exposed Memories"

Author: Leprechaun's Fairy

Summary: "After Peeta is Hijacked Plutarch comes up with a way to get him back to normal. They just need to remind Peeta of things the Capitol didn't know about and couldn't use against him. Katniss has the perfect memory but does she have the courage to share it?"

Characters: Katniss E., Peeta M.

Rated: T

Genre: Romance

Words: 4,738

Published: May 28

4. "Fate Is A Fickle Thing"

Author: Ellana-san

Summary: “When there is only one seat left on a plane what do you do? Argue with the handsome stranger who wants it, of course.”

Characters: [Effie T., Haymitch A.] [Katniss E., Peeta M.]

Rated: T

Genre: Romance/Humor

Words: 4,510

Published: Jul 30

5. “Hide and Seek”

Author: sponsormusings

Summary: “To hide, to seek, to find. Some games can not only acknowledge what you've got now, but can also remind you of what you once had... A submission for Prompts in Panem, March/April 2015. Day 6.”

Characters: Katniss E., Peeta M.

Rated: T

Genre: Family/Romance

Words: 1,791

Published: Apr 6

6. “In The Spring”

Author: Writingwife83

Summary: “Set in the Epilogue of Mockingjay. Katniss has made a big decision about her life and future with her husband Peeta. She knows it's what he's always wanted, but still she's haunted by fear. It's time to tell him the big news, and she can only hope that things will go just right. (my first Hunger Games fic.)”

Characters: Katniss E., Peeta M.]

Rated: K+

Genre: Romance/Drama

Words: 1,746

Published: Jul 17

7. "In the Wee Small Hours"

Author: ct522

Summary: "Katniss and Peeta run into each other while taking a walk in the "wee small hours." Either insomnia, or nightmares or both keep them from sleeping. Set between Games and the Quarter Quell. What happens when they run into each other? The song inspiration is Frank Sinatra's "In The Wee, Small Hours." Prompt by JamieSommers23"

Characters: Katniss E., Peeta M.

Rated: T

Genre: Romance/Drama

Words: 3,159

Published: Mar 20

8. "Like a River Runs"

Author: bleachers

Summary: "Annie's broken the surface and he can't make out her silhouette through the mess of life past the foam. He stops for a second, lets his legs dangle in the open water, before he pushes himself even harder. Finnick never liked playing catch-up as a child, but for Annie Cresta, he'd do anything. / Winner of the Caesar's Palace Monthly Contest for June."

Characters: Finnick O., Annie C.

Rated: T

Genre: Angst/Romance

Words: 3,343

Published: Jun 28

9. "Meeting In The Middle"

Author: cutemara

Summary: "Please not Madge. Please not Katniss. Please not Prim. That is what keeps on playing over and over and over again in my mind."

Characters: Gale H., Madge U.

Rated: K

Genre: Drama/Romance

Words: 2,053

Published: Mar 15

10. "Sharing In Thirteen"

Author: Ellana-san

Summary: "Utter crack in which Fulvia and Effie are both in 13 at the same time.

Plutarch and Haymitch share a room, Fulvia and Effie share a room and both couple are sneaking around, trying to hide their relationship from the other. Utter crack, did I say?

Hayffie. Heavensdew."

Characters: [Haymitch A., Effie T.] [Plutarch H., Fulvia C.]

Rated: T

Genre: Romance/Humor

Words: 1,480

Published: May 25

11. “Sparking Frost”

Author: Miss Ami-chan

Summary: “Friend & I wondered what sparked the frostiness between K&P at start of CF & my Peeta muse gave me this: Two weeks before the Victory Tour. Peeta is muddling through life back in District 12, one evening while checking on Haymitch he begins to realize the weight of becoming mentors things spiral on from there, leading to the bakery, the Hob, and a meeting with Katniss. [COMPLETE]”

Characters: Haymitch A., Katniss E., Gale H., Peeta M.

Rated: T

Genre: Drama/Friendship

Words: 4,059

Published: Mar 24

12. “Stuck in a Moment”

Author: sponsormusings

Summary: “For a 'people person' like Peeta, being stuck inside with little access to the outside world was not the most ideal situation. But as snow sets in across District Twelve, having Katniss there to keep him company through the storm definitely helps... A submission for Prompts in Panem, March/April 2015. Day 4.”

Characters: Katniss E., Peeta M.

Rated: T

Genre: Romance

Words: 1,419

Published: Apr 6

13. "Such Great Heights"

Author: bleachers

Summary: In which Finnick is rain-soaked, late, and on the cusp of something great."

Characters: Annie C., Finnick O.

Rated: T

Genre: Romance/Angst

Words: 2,101

Published: Jun 21

14. "This Friday Night"

Author: sponsormusings

Summary: "Katniss Everdeen was just out to get drunk; to celebrate, not commiserate.

But after a few cocktails and a little encouragement, she can't help but do both anyway...

A submission for Prompts in Panem March/April 2015, Day 2."

Characters: Katniss E., Peeta M.

Rated: T

Genre: Romance/Humor

Words: 2,520

Published: Mar 31

15. "Valentine's Day Angst"

Author: MaryAnn1819

Summary: “Katniss thinks Valentine's Day is stupid holiday, but she still wants to know who Gale's bringing to the dance. For the Round 1 Day 7 prompt of Prompting Everthorne.”

Characters: Gale H., Katniss E.

Rated: T

Genre: Romance

Words: 2,010

Published: Mar 5

Data Analysis

The analysis of data revolved around my understanding and the analysis of multiple sets of texts: The Hunger Games storyworlds (novels and films), the dystopian genre, my understanding of the academic writings and uses pertaining to The Hunger Games series, and The Hunger Games fan fiction stories. To frame the analysis, a multi-step process was required. As previously stated, in order to familiarize myself with the intertexts surrounding The Hunger Games, I referred to McKee's four categories for Textual Analysis: (1) other texts in the series, novels and films; (2) the text genre, dystopian; (3) intertexts about the text itself, academic discourses surrounding the texts; (4) and the public context in which the text is circulated, fan fiction.

To help frame my analysis of The Hunger Games fanners' stories, I modeled my examination on the work illustrated in Scholes and Ostenson's article “Understanding the Appeal of Dystopian Young Adult Fiction” (2013). In addition to this, I also utilized Jenkins's framework concerning different ways fans may rework an existing storyworld,

outlined in his chapter “Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show” found in his book *Textual Poachers* (2013).

Copious notes and annotations were required while forming my interpretations, as well as when analyzing the points of data. To build the interpretations of and exploration into the data, a multi-faceted layering of scrutiny was necessary. These steps helped build my understanding of the storyworld of The Hunger Games, while providing the basis for the interpretation and analysis of the data, i.e., the nature of the response – the fan fiction story.

A general understanding of the texts in the series, as well as the text genre, represent the first two of McKee’s categories for analysis. These categories frame the interpretations of the next two categories, the intertexts and public context. Once critically examined, my understandings of the texts were categorized with overall themes, symbols, and motifs that were identified by me. These elements were the result of my reading and determination of connections found in the texts. I then compared the dystopian themes identified by Scholes and Ostenson in YAL dystopian fiction to my own discovered dystopian connections found in the original texts, thereupon identifying the first points of commonalities found within the data.

Next was the analysis of the fan fiction stories, a two-fold process. These stories represented the transaction between the fanner and The Hunger Games text, that which I believe to be the aesthetic response. To fully appreciate the fanners’ fan fiction story, I had to first understand how the fanner enters the storyworld; in this case, how she chose to rewrite the world. Using Henry Jenkins’s “Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show”, I identified the fanners’ entrance into The Hunger Games, thus drawing inferences

concerning what the fanners identified as an important part of the story.

The heart of this study was found in the final step of the data analysis, the identification of what was most represented by the fanners in the stories. To help distinguish the themes, I relied on my identity as a veteran, secondary English teacher of sixteen years. As I made note of the themes found within the stories, I compared them to Scholes and Ostenson's dystopian themes, as well as to those of my own findings. This analysis represents the conclusions that were found when determining the nature of the fan fiction responses to The Hunger Games. The conclusion of the findings support the idea that the fan fiction stories, these aesthetic responses, represent critical readings of a text that correspond to an academic analysis, thus supporting their value of use within a classroom.

Steps of Analysis

1. Identified themes based upon my readings and understandings of the storyworld of and academic discourses surrounding The Hunger Games
2. Compared identified themes to those found in Scholes and Ostenson article concerning popular young adult dystopian texts
3. Identified fanners' entrances into The Hunger Games storyworld based on the fan fiction texts to compare to Jenkins's "Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show"
4. Identified themes found in fifteen fan fiction stories; compared to themes identified by me to Scholes and Ostenson article
5. Made inferences concerning the nature of the aesthetic response of the fan fiction story – What can fan fiction tell us about the response to literature?

- What is the nature of responses to The Hunger Games in online fan fiction stories?
- How do the themes and characteristics of dystopian literature compare to the themes presented within the fanners' stories?
- How do the fanners enter the storyworld of The Hunger Games, and what conclusion can be drawn?
- What examples of critical thinking and critical reading are noted in the fan fiction stories?

Scholes and Ostenson's Article "Understanding the Appeal of Dystopian Young Adult Fiction"

As I delved into the study of The Hunger Games as an example of a dystopian novel, I looked to Justin Scholes and Jon Ostenson's article (2013) "Understanding the Appeal of Dystopian Young Adult Fiction" as a foundation for prominent elements for analysis found in various works. Whether it is the pressure to conform, media manipulation or propaganda, division of society, or abused advances in technology, they make note of what common features are found within the stories, including that of *The Hunger Games*. In their research, they also identify three recurring themes found throughout sixteen different novels. They include predominant themes of inhumanity and isolation, agency and conscience, and relationship, whether romantic or platonic.

Stretching throughout all three of these themes is *The Hunger Games*. As Katniss prepares to begin the Hunger Games, she grows aware of the injustices surrounding the people of the various districts as compared to the lavish and indulgent lifestyles of those living in the Capitol. She experiences the inhumanity and isolation of being from an

impoverished district, while she also struggles with the complacency of others who refuse to do anything to stop the games. Along with her physical trials of the games, Katniss also faces moral dilemmas as she works through her conflicting emotions of what she must do in order to survive and protect her family and friends from President Snow. Caught between becoming a symbol of the rebellion the Mockingjay, or playing along with the President's game to try and survive, Katniss grows to understand her role as an agent for change, battling her conscience throughout her journey. Although the popular love triangle is hinted at throughout the series, the true focus is on the relationships Katniss experiences with everyone in the story. Whether realizing that her mother is there to help her, or understanding the pain that Haymitch hides through alcohol, or simply navigating her own feelings of self-worth, Katniss understands that the fight is not simply hers and that she must open herself up to others in order to grow.

To frame my analysis of the fan fiction stories, Scholes and Ostenson's work proved somewhat beneficial as I compared the fanners' responses to the patterns and trends found within their research. A world of themes common in dystopian YAL was laid out, and I looked to find the nuances of these ideas throughout the stories (Table 1). As I reviewed the stories, it became evident that the fanners did not add to the dystopian world; instead, they accepted Collins's world as it was created. If any of the themes identified by Scholes and Ostenson were present in the fanners' stories, they were also previously identified in Collins's texts. Rather than develop a fan fiction story that built on Collins's dystopia, fanners instead chose to focus upon the relationships among characters within the original.

Table 1. Completed Data Analysis Chart of Dystopian Elements Found in Fan Fiction Stories.

Fan Fiction Stories	Platonic or Romantic Relationship	Excessive Measures to Police Society	Pressure to Conform	Media Manipulation	Measures to Cover Up Flaws and Lies in Society	Erase or Revise Society's History	Limited or Complete Lack of Individual Freedom	People Divided into Groups	Flawed or Abused Advances in Technology
1	Character Dislocation (AU): focuses on relationship, present day, no dystopia elements								
2			Must watch the games		Capitol schooling			Servants (Avoxes)	
3	Katniss/Peeta			District 13 Propos		Hijacking			
4	Character Dislocation (AU): focuses on relationship between Effie and Haymitch, present day, no dystopia elements								
5	Genre Shifting (AU): story focuses on Peeta's memory of his father, juxtaposed with life with Katniss and their children, no reference to society								
6	Katniss/Peeta	References aspects of the original storyworld dystopia elements, but story includes none of its own							
7	Katniss/Peeta	Quarter Quell Games					Games District 12 Life		
8	Annie/Finnick	Spying					Forced prostitution of Tributes (Finnick)	Districts vs. Capitol	
9	Madge/Gale	Reaping, Peacekeepers Treaty of Treason		Televised Tribute parade			Reaping Forced participation in Games	Districts	
10	Genre Shifting (AU): Humorous nature of the story negates the dystopia elements; however, the story stays true to the routines of District 13								
11	Peeta/Family Peeta/Katniss	Very similar to dystopia characteristics in books							
12	Genre Shifting (AU): focuses on relationship between Peeta and Katniss, with Katniss dead and Peeta in denial, no dystopia elements								
13	Character Dislocation (AU): focuses on relationship between Annie and Finnick, present day, no dystopia elements								
14	Character Dislocation (AU): focuses on relationship between Katniss and Peeta, present day, no dystopia elements								
15	Katniss/Gale	preHG story, references none of the dystopia elements other than being separated into Districts							
The Hunger Games Series	Katniss/Gale Katniss/Peeta	Peacekeepers		Propaganda by Capitol and District 13		Hijacking of memories	Districts' lack of freedoms	Society divided into Districts	

1. "As Soon As I Can" by wouldratherbeaunicorn
2. "Cookie Crumbs" by VictoriaAntoine
3. "Exposed Memories" by Leprechaun's Fairy
4. "Fate Is A Fickle Thing" by Ellana-san
5. "Hide and Seek" by sponsormusings
6. "In The Spring" by Writingwife83
7. "In the Wee Small Hours" by ct522
8. "Like a River Runs" by bleachers
9. "Meeting In The Middle" by cutemara
10. "Sharing In Thirteen" by Ellana-san
11. "Sparkling Frost" by Miss Ami-chan
12. "Stuck in a Moment" by sponsormusings
13. "Such Great Heights" by bleachers
14. "This Friday Night" by sponsormusings
15. "Valentine's Day Angst" by MaryAnn1819

Henry Jenkins’s “Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show”

Although originally written about fan fiction regarding television shows, Jenkins’s framework (2013) for the different ways in which fans rework a story can also be applied to fan fiction based on novels and movies, such as those found within The Hunger Games fandom (Table 2). Utilizing these techniques to identify how fanners interact with the storyworld through their reworking of the original text, I analyzed the stories in order to understand the readers’ sense-making. This allowed me to also make interpretations concerning how a fanner’s understanding of the societal world was evident in the response.

Table 2. Completed Data Analysis Chart of Jenkins’s Rewriting a Story found within Fan Fiction Stories.

Fan Fiction Stories	Recontextualization	Expanding the Series Timeline	Refocalization	Moral Realignment	Genre Shifting (AU)	Character Dislocation (AU)	*Cross-over	Personalization	Emotional Intensification	Eroticization
1					X Romance Tragedy	X Present			X Death	
2		X preHG	X Effie	X Effie						
3	X District 13 Hijacking								X Desire Love	X Sex scene
4			X Effie Haymitch			X Virginia Present				X Sex Scene
5		X preHG postHG	X Peeta							
6	X Vignette of Pregnancy	X postMJ preEpilogue			X Romance Drama					

Responding to the Storyworld of The Hunger Games through Fan Fiction Fandoms

7	X Vignette before Quarter Quell									
8		X preHG	X Finnick		X Angst Romance					
9			X Gale Madge							
10	X Scene while in District 13		X Effie Haymitch Plutarch Fulvia		X Romance Humor					
11	X Before Quarter Quell		X Peeta							
12		X postMJ preEpilogue	X Peeta		X Romance					
13			X Finnick Annie		X Romance Angst	X NYC Present				
14					X Romance Humor	X Present				
15		X preHG			X Romance					

* Crossover is a filter in Fanfiction.net that I did not use, therefore all stories labeled as such were not a part of my analysis.

1. "As Soon As I Can" by wouldratherbeaunicorn
2. "Cookie Crumbs" by VictoriaAntoine
3. "Exposed Memories" by Leprechaun's Fairy
4. "Fate Is A Fickle Thing" by Ellana-san
5. "Hide and Seek" by sponsormusings
6. "In The Spring" by Writingwife8
7. "In the Wee Small Hours" by ct522
8. "Like a River Runs" by bleachers
9. "Meeting In The Middle" by cutemara
10. "Sharing In Thirteen" by Ellana-san
11. "Sparkling Frost" by Miss Ami-chan
12. "Stuck in a Moment" by sponsormusings
13. "Such Great Heights" by bleachers
14. "This Friday Night" by sponsormusings
15. "Valentine's Day Angst" by MaryAnn1819

Through multiple close readings of the selected fan fictions stories, I noticed patterns within the stories concerning how the fanners chose to rework the original.

Crossover stories, the blending of more than one storyworld, can be filtered for exclusively, and because I did not include these in my filtering process, none of the stories selected include crossover elements. Also absent from any of the stories, is a personalization aspect, described by Jenkins as a fanner placing herself within a story as a *Mary Sue*. The term *Mary Sue* “describes a character who is basically an idealised version of the author”, typically, one who will go into the storyworld in order to save the character(s), and possibly earn their undying love (Pugh, 2005, p. 85). According to Jenkins, “so strong is the fan taboo against such crude personalization that original female characters are often scrutinized for any signs of autobiographical intent” (2013, pp. 171-173). With the absence of personalization, I contend that the fanners recognize this prejudice against *Mary Sue* characters, and that they so strongly connect with Collins’s dynamic characters within the texts that they do not feel it necessary to insert themselves directly into the story.

Personalization. While Jenkins offers illustrations of the uses of *Mary Sue* characters as examples of personalization (2013), I argue that his view of the approach that fanners take to rework the original is lacking with regards to personalization. While it may have begun with fans inserting themselves into stories, I contend that when looking at fan fiction as responses to literature, the personalization aspect is present in all fan fiction stories.

All reading is personal. The meaning created by a reader comes from her experiences, and what she brings to the text. Each reader brings “to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations” thus adding dimensions to the original work, creating a unique experience; one that is never repeated

since it is the result of the transaction that occurred between the reader and the text, during that particular reading, with those particular experiences, at that particular time (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 30). As a result, each fan fiction writing is personal, illustrating an element of personalization to the work. These responses are not static representations of a reading experience, instead they represent the layers of a story that fanners dissect as they create and make meaning.

With fan fiction specifically, fanners explore the storyworld by creating new layers to the original story. While fanners draw on aspects of the original storyworld, whether from the plot or the characters, they also are drawing on aspects of their own lives. A fan fiction response is a critiquing of the original through adding a layer of personalization to it. As readers respond to literature aesthetically, their response represents the “lived through” experience, when the reader extracts her personal meaning from the text, thus making it her own (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 27; 1982, p. 271).

Recontextualization, Expanding the Series Timeline, Refocalization, and Moral Realignment. With the accepted notion that all fan fiction demonstrates an aspect of personalization added to the storyworld, the most prevalent of Jenkins’s other techniques were those of recontextualization, expanding the series timeline, and refocalization, with one story adding in an aspect of moral realignment. By identifying stories that utilized these techniques, it became clear that there is some overlap among these that allows fanners to reimagine parts of the original story by either adding in missing scenes, expanding the timeline with flashbacks or backstories, and focusing on the thoughts and feelings of characters other than Katniss. Another technique fanners

utilize in these stories to enter the storyworld is through the emotional intensification of a character's feelings, as well as through adding an element of eroticization.

One way in which a fan may rework a text is through *recontextualization*, a technique that involves creating a story, usually a short vignette that fills in the gaps found within the original. It may also be used to help explain something that was not properly addressed or expanded upon. Another practice is *expanding the series timeline*, which allows a writer to add events that take place either before or after the original series' narrative. *Refocalization* permits more attention to be given to minor characters that fans may feel deserve a larger role within the story, or characters of which fans are fond. Often times, fans disagree with the decisions of the characters, wishing that another choice had been made. *Moral realignment* enables a fan to question the moral positions of the characters so that she may choose a different path.

Alternate Universes: Genre Shifting and Character Dislocation. While the majority of the selected fan fiction stories illustrate fanners entering the storyworld through techniques such as recontextualization, expanding the series timeline, refocalization, and moral realignment, others demonstrate entrance into the original story through the use of an alternate universe, especially character dislocation, the moving of characters from their original situations (Jenkins, 2013, p. 171). From the stories chosen, these place the characters – Katniss and Peeta, Effie and Haymitch, Annie and Finnick, Katniss and Peeta, again – into our current world.

Most of the chosen also utilize an additional form of incorporating an alternate universe, genre shifting. Jenkins describes these stories as those that “shift the balance between plot action and characterization, placing primary emphasis upon moments that

define the character relationships rather than using such moments as background or motivation for the dominant plot” (2013, p. 169). Whereas Jenkins identifies genre shifting as an example of an alternate universe, many of the chosen stories are still placed within Collins’s set world; however, they shift the genre to focus more on the characters, instead of the dystopic plot. While the main literary genres of The Hunger Games series are seen as science fiction, dystopian, and/or adventure, the genres of these chosen fan fiction stories range from those labeled by the fanners as romance, tragedy, angst, and humor. These fanners forego the dystopian elements of the original storyworld in order to focus more on the relationships between characters, as well as on the characters’ feelings throughout the story.

Emotional Intensification and Eroticization. In addition to the preceding techniques, many of the fan fiction stories also deal with aspects of emotional turmoil that the characters experience, such as death and loss, elements of turmoil that are also seen within Collins’s storyworld. Readers experience Katniss’s feelings of guilt when she learns of the destruction of District Twelve in retaliation for her escape from the games in *Catching Fire*. Readers struggle along with her as she navigates through her feelings toward both Peeta and Gale. Readers feel her grief in the end of *Mockingjay* as she suffers through the death of Prim, her sister whom she was trying to protect throughout the series. When fanners “emphasize moments of narrative crisis”, it is what Jenkins refers to as the *emotional intensification* of these events and/or character’s feelings (2013, p. 174).

Throughout fan fiction this emotional intensification of characters and scenes within stories leads to it often being referred to as a hurt/comfort. Many stories of this

genre include characters who are given a hard time, emotionally or physically, and are then rehabilitated by another (Pugh, 2005, p. 243). The use of emotional intensification within these stories, also often leads to the development of the more intense elements of the characters' physical relationships, eroticization.

Many fanners choose to explore the storyworld by expanding upon the underlying sexual relationships and/or tensions they may see within the text. With *The Hunger Games* written as young adult texts, the reading audience is marketed toward adolescence and teens, limiting the sexual actions of the characters. It is never stated within the texts that Katniss and Peeta have sex; however, in the epilogue of *Mockingjay* Katniss reflects on her two children with Peeta. Despite it never being explicitly stated, there are times within the story that allow for fanners to explore the nature of their relationship together. When on the train heading for the Capitol, Katniss and Peeta find comfort with one another, leading others to talk.

I drift off only to be roused by nightmares that have increased in number and intensity. Peeta, who spends much of the night roaming the train, hears me screaming as I struggle to break out of the haze of drugs that merely prolong the horrible dreams. He manages to wake me and calm me down. Then he climbs into bed to hold me until I fall back to sleep. After that, I refuse the pills. But every night I let him into my bed. We manage the darkness as we did in the arena, wrapped in each other's arms, guarding against dangers that can descend at any moment. Nothing else happens, but our arrangement quickly becomes a subject of gossip on the train.

(Collins, 2009, p. 72)

When in the Training Center, preparing to enter the games for the second time, they also spend their nights with one another, helping to ward off their ongoing nightmares.

“So what should we do with our last few days?”

“I just want to spend every possible minute of the rest of my life with you,” Peeta replies.

“Come on, then,” I say, pulling him into my room. It feels like such a luxury, sleeping with Peeta again. I didn’t realize until now how starved I’ve been for human closeness. For the feel of him beside me in the darkness. I wish I hadn’t wasted the last couple of nights shutting him out. I sink down into sleep, enveloped in his warmth...

(Collins, 2009, p. 244)

While Katniss states that nothing other than sleeping happens between her and Peeta, these descriptions of the closeness between the two allow fanners to imagine that there is more to their relationship than simply comfort. Only two of the chosen fan fiction stories add an element of eroticization to the story, which will be discussed in each of the stories’ analyses.

Revisiting the Theoretical Framework

Responses to reading are important. As a teacher, I have struggled with what it means when I ask a student to *respond to the literature*. What does the response look like? What does it tell me about the reading experience? How can it be assessed? These questions led me to this research. Often in studies, the focus is on the reader and her response, rather than just on the response itself. Through examining fan fiction as representations of response, I investigated how these responses demonstrate advanced, academic discourses that mirror the themes found in academia, such as in teaching, even though they are found in what are often times considered informal environments. These responses also illustrated how fanners elaborated on the meaning found in the storyworld, as they negotiated their private understandings in a public space.

I believe that these fan fiction responses represent a tangible example of what Rosenblatt describes as the poem representing the intrinsic value that lies in the reader living through the transaction with the text, especially in regards to the personalization of the storyworld found within their stories (1978, p. 12). These responses do illustrate a

process that is “active, self-ordering and self-corrective” (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 11). It is my belief that by showing how these responses illustrate critical readings of the texts, others will recognize that the inherent nature of response, such as those of fan fiction writings, should not be overlooked within classroom settings, helping to change the nature of classrooms from teacher-driven to student-centered, allowing for students to determine the nature of their own responses to literature.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Synthesis

Henry Jenkins's "Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show"

As I read through each fan fiction story, I made note of how each fanner chose to enter into the original storyworld, utilizing Jenkins's framework, as seen previously in Table 2. By understanding how the fanner chose to rewrite the story, I was able to draw conclusions concerning what aspects of the original story were important to the fanner, i.e., whether it was the character, the genre, or the conflict.

Characters

To better an understanding of the fan fiction stories, I have provided descriptions of the characters, as they are described within Collins's original storyworld, that are focused upon within the fan fiction stories. The following characterizations describe the characters in both the novels and in the films, and when there is a difference, it is noted.

Katniss Everdeen is the main character and narrator of The Hunger Games series. Through her first person point of view, readers witness the atrocities of the games, the over-indulgence of the Capitol, and the rebellion by the districts in reaction to these travesties. As a tribute from District Twelve, Katniss is strong-willed, and willing to do what needs to be done to make it home to her sister Prim, and to her mother. After losing her father in a mining accident, Katniss took on the role of caretaker of her family while her mother suffered through a depression breakdown. She continues this caretaker role throughout the series, especially with regards to Peeta. As she mentally makes her way back through tragedies that occur in *Mockingjay*, she finds that it is Peeta who she cannot be without, resulting in the two of them moving back to District Twelve after the rebellion in order to build some sort of life together.

Katniss's fellow tribute from District Twelve is **Peeta Mellark**, the baker's son. While Katniss at times struggles to get along with people, Peeta is open and personable. During his interview before the games, he admits to the crush he has had on Katniss since he was five-years-old, creating a star-crossed lovers theme that the two develop throughout the games. When Katniss eventually admits to playing along for the cameras, readers understand the heartache Peeta feels as he realizes that while his feelings for Katniss were true, hers for him were not. Despite this, he remains true to his goal of protecting Katniss and keeping her alive through the games. When the rebels attempt a rescue attempt during the Third Quarter Quell, he is left behind and taken prisoner by the Capitol. The Capitol *hijacks* his memories of Katniss, causing him to misremember past events. Although he eventually is able to distinguish the true memories from the false, he continues to struggle with the nightmares of his times in the games, as well as of his torture in the Capitol.

Haymitch Abernathy is the only remaining District Twelve Victor when readers are introduced to him during the Reaping Ceremony in *The Hunger Games*. He is known throughout Panem as a drunk, often seen with a drink in hand. He won the 50th Hunger Games, known as the Second Quarter Quell, twenty-four years before he becomes the mentor to Katniss and Peeta for the 74th Hunger Games. Although Haymitch is difficult to handle, and hardly ever sober, he promises the two to clean up his act enough to help them throughout their first games, as well as through their second, the Third Quarter Quell. Once in District Thirteen, he continues to help with the rebellion, but more importantly, he helps Katniss as she navigates her way to becoming the Mockingjay. In

the end, he returns to District Twelve to raise geese during his moments of sobriety when he runs out of alcohol.

In the series, the majority of characters with whom Katniss interacts are from the varying districts; however, an exception to this is **Effie Trinket**, Katniss and Peeta's District Escort. Effie, being from the Capitol, acts as the liaison for the District Twelve Tributes. She arranges the schedules, monitors their actions, and helps everything to run smoothly, event to event. Effie offers readers a glimpse of Capitol life, as well as a Capitol Citizen's view of the *games*. Although Katniss and Effie often clash in the beginning of the series, Katniss begins to realize that her perceptions of the stereotypical Capitol citizen may be flawed when she sees Effie become visibly upset by the Victors being called on again to compete in the 75th Annual Hunger Games. Readers discover in *Mockingjay* that Effie was kidnapped by the Capitol following the victors' escape from the arena, and later rescued by the rebels when the Capitol falls. She returns at the end of the novel to help Katniss prepare for President Snow's execution, leaving after to return to her home in the Capitol. In the last two films of the series, based on *Mockingjay*, Effie's role is enlarged, allowing her to be with Katniss during her time in District Thirteen, helping prepare her for her filmed propos.

Gale Hawthorne is another District Twelve resident who is Katniss's best friend. Their fates become intertwined when both of their fathers die in the same mining accident, and they then find themselves both hunting outside of the gates of the district so that they can put food on the table for their families. The series does not begin with Katniss and Gale in a romantic relationship, but it is subtly developed throughout *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay*, as Katniss wrestles with the feelings she has for both

Peeta and Gale. It is when she realizes that she cannot live with the idea that it may have been one of Gale's developed bombs to kill Prim that she understands that there is no future for her and Gale together.

With Katniss being predominantly preoccupied with taking care of her mother and her sister Prim, she has little time to engage in friendships with other girls her age. The closest character to resemble what could be described as a friend to Katniss, other than Gale, is **Madge Undersee**, the mayor's daughter. Madge only makes an appearance in the novel series a couple of times, but her actions in *The Hunger Games* create the path that eventually leads Katniss to becoming the Mockingjay. When Katniss volunteers as tribute to save Prim from the Reaping, Madge visits her to say goodbye, gifting her with a pin of a mockingjay to wear as a token from District Twelve. While the importance of the mockingjay symbol does not become a focus until *Catching Fire*, the pin is the one item that Katniss is able to carry with her from home. Whether Madge is aware of the symbology of the mockingjay is unclear, and readers are left with their own interpretations since Madge and her family do not survive the Capitol's bombing and destruction of District Twelve at the end of *Catching Fire*. In the films, the character of Madge does not exist.

Plutarch Heavensbee is Head Gamemaker in *Catching Fire*, replacing Seneca Crane who is killed for allowing two tributes to survive in the 74th Hunger Games. Once safe in District Thirteen, Katniss learns that Plutarch is the leader of the rebellion, and orchestrated the escape from the Quarter Quell. While he aids the rebellion, he is seen as callous and uncaring by Katniss, who questions what his true motives are. She realizes that he will align himself with whomever he believes to be the winning team, resulting in

being on the powerful side. After the collapse of the Capitol, he is named the Secretary of Communications by the newly elected, President Paylor.

Following and working with Plutarch is his assistant **Fulvia Cardew**. She is one of the minor characters who make her entrance in the novel *Mockingjay*. In District Thirteen, she helps create and film propos, propaganda shots, of Katniss as the Mockingjay, and it is her idea to pay homage to the fallen Tributes and Victors through a propos narrated by Finnick. She survives the rebellion, and continues to work with Plutarch in his new role. Fulvia is another character, like Madge Undersee, who does not exist in the film, with her primary role in the films taken by Effie Trinket.

Finnick Odair, the District Four Victor of the 65th Hunger Games, becomes Katniss and Peeta's ally during the third Quarter Quell, as they all try to survive the arena. He is the youngest tribute to ever win the games, and his stunningly good looks have made him a favorite among the Capitol citizens. Known as a heartthrob with a variety of lovers, readers later learn the dark truth surrounding Finnick's popularity and companionship. Once of age, at 16, President Snow began using Finnick as a prostitute, given to the highest bidder. In the eight years since this began happening, Finnick learns to adapt to his circumstances by trading in secrets, rather than money, from his *companions*. With these secrets, he is able to share the truth with others in the Capitol, as well as through all of the districts, in order to help fuel the rebellion.

Throughout his popularity in the Capitol, Finnick remains silent about one important aspect of his life, his undying love for **Annie Cresta**. Annie is another District Four Victor, who becomes unhinged during her games when she witnesses her fellow tribute decapitated. Not willing to face the violence any longer, she runs into the woods

of the arena, hiding from the other tributes. When the arena is flooded, she alone survives, as she is the best swimmer being from District Four, the fishing district. When rescued from the Capitol, she and Finnick are reunited and married in District Thirteen. Together they enjoy a brief period of happiness. During the final attack on the Capitol, Finnick is killed, leaving his pregnant wife Annie behind to raise their son.

Fan Fiction Stories' Analyses and Synthesis

The analysis of each of these stories resulted from reading each on its own, as I explored the ways in which the fanners chose to enter the storyworld, and the additions they made to the overall multiverse of The Hunger Games. As I approached each story multiple times, I copiously took notes concerning the fanners' use of characters, setting, and plot elements as they related to the original storyworld, as well as what dystopic elements were included within the fanners' story, utilizing the themes identified in Scholes and Ostenson's research concerning popular dystopian, young adult novels (2012). In addition to the above, I dissected how the fanners chose to enter the storyworld, using "Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show" (2013), so that I would better understand to what aspects of the overall story, characters, and relationships fanners related. After thorough readings of each story, I then began a comparative analysis to the original texts, and films when necessary, in order to draw conclusions as to what the fan fiction story, the response to literature, was illustrating about the fanners' understanding of the original. My analyses of each story follows.

“As Soon as I Can” by wouldratherbeaunicorn: Genre Shifting, Character**Dislocation, Emotional Intensification (Full Story Available in Appendix A)**

Context of the Original Storyworld. The original storyworld of The Hunger Games is set in our world, but in the future. The government in charge of Panem, the new formation of the country is known as the Capitol, which controls twelve districts, of what was once North America. As a message to the districts for a rebellion that occurred 74 years ago, the Capitol created the Hunger Games, where one boy and one girl are chosen from each district to compete in a fight to the death, on live television, until only one child, one Victor, remains.

Katniss Everdeen, the main character, as well as narrator of the novels, volunteers in the place of her younger sister Prim, so that she will be saved from competing, at least for this year. Accompanying Katniss to compete for District Twelve is the male tribute, Peeta Mellark, the son of a baker, who admits later to being in love with Katniss. Throughout the games, Katniss uses Peeta’s love to her, as well as his, advantage, although not in a malicious fashion. Building on the star-crossed lovers theme, Katniss is able to secure wealthy sponsors who send her food and much needed medicine, which results also in Katniss and Peeta being named the first ever dual Victors of the games, when they refuse to kill each other and opt for suicide instead. However, always trying to survive, Katniss calls the Capitol’s bluff with the suicide, as she knows that the berries in her and Peeta’s hands are not poisonous.

Viewing this as an act that sparks a rebellion, the Capitol, mainly President Snow, creates a special set of games for the following year, the Third Quarter Quell, in order to show that not even the Victors are safe from the Capitol’s threats. In this game, 24

previous Victors from the twelve districts are called back into the arena to compete. The second novel of the series, *Catching Fire*, focuses on the growth of this revolution, and Katniss's new role as the face of the rebellion. The novel ends with Katniss and a few other Victors being rescued from the games, but, Peeta is left behind, and captured by the Capitol, later to be used as a pawn against Katniss, who finds that she has developed feelings for him.

Set in the once believed to be destroyed District Thirteen, *Mockingjay* concludes Katniss's journey of leading the revolution against the Capitol as she fully becomes the Mockingjay, the symbol of the rebellion. Rescuing Peeta, the rebels find that his memories have been tampered with, resulting in him desiring to kill Katniss when together. Trying to rebuild the relationship they once had, Peeta and Katniss, while on a mission to assassinate President Snow, find themselves in the middle of the fight. As the final attacks occur to finally bring the rebellion to an end, Katniss's original goal of protecting her sister Prim is shattered when she is killed by a bomb. Discovering later that it may have been the rebels themselves who dropped the bomb to kill her sister, Katniss realizes that she may have helped to simply replace one dictator with another; as a result, she kills the rebel leader, President Coin in place of President Snow. She eventually returns to her home in District Twelve to try to recover from her losses. Throughout the journey she comes to understand that it is Peeta who she needs in her life. Collins ends the series with an epilogue set in an indeterminate future, where Katniss and Peeta have married, and now have two children.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. Utilizing both types of Alternate Universe strategies for rewriting the storyworld, genre shifting and character dislocation, "As Soon as I Can"

Responding to the Storyworld of The Hunger Games through Fan Fiction Fandoms

by wouldratherbeaunicorn is a fan fiction story that displaces Peeta and Katniss into another universe, similar to our own, but it still holds true to one of the more popular themes of the original storyworld, the love between these two main characters. In this new story, while on an assignment to collect plants for observation, Katniss's plane crashes; however she has just enough time before her injuries overtake her to call Peeta one last time. Categorized by the fanner as a Romance/Tragedy genre, the story focuses primarily on Peeta and this overwhelming love for Katniss, as told through a third person limited point of view, Peeta's.

The story is quite different from The Hunger Games; however, the author remains true to the original texts in one important way. While set in an alternate universe, this story intensifies the emotional connection between Peeta and Katniss, building the emotional intensification. Once Katniss dies, Peeta becomes so distraught that it is implied that he commits suicide rather than live without her.

He took a different way home. And he wasn't paying attention
when a car came out of nowhere and hit him.

Or maybe he was.

(wouldratherbeaunicorn, "As Soon as I Can")

The Hunger Games series, while told through Katniss's first person point of view, implies somewhat of the same through a conversation overheard between Peeta and Gale, "Katniss will pick whoever she thinks she can't live without" (Collins, 2010, pg. 329).

This story takes the same concept of the love between Katniss and Peeta being so strong that it is necessary in order for them each to survive, and it illustrates through Peeta's actions that he cannot survive without her.

The story focuses on Peeta and his love for Katniss primarily, but other canonical characters are mentioned as well. In the beginning of the series, readers are introduced to

the strained relationship between Katniss and her mother. After her father died, Katniss became the one to take care of the family as her mother retreated into a deep depression.

When heading to the Capitol for the games Katniss reflects on her tenuous relationship with her mother, and her fear of dying without being able to reconcile and tell her that she forgives her:

Prim was thrilled to have her back, but I kept watching, waiting for her to disappear on us again. I didn't trust her. And some small gnarled place inside me hated her for her weakness, for her neglect, for the months she had put us through. Prim forgave her, but I had taken a step back from my mother, put up a wall to protect myself from needing her, and nothing was ever the same between us again.

(Collins, 2008, p. 53)

Referencing this distance between Katniss and her mother, as she lies dying, she tells Peeta to "Tell my mom that I forgive her. And that I love her. I love her so much" (wouldratherbeaunicorn, "As Soon as I Can"). While displacing these characters into another universe, the fanfiction has remained true to Collins's description of the essence of their relationship, while set into a different context.

Another important character referenced in the story is Katniss's sister, Prim. Different from the original storyworld is the changing of Prim's fate; rather than dying in the Capitol from a bomb, she is still alive. This is an interesting change. Throughout the series, Prim is the one character Katniss protects as much as she does Peeta. It is Prim's name being drawn during the reaping that begins Katniss's journey as she volunteers to take her place. It is also around Prim when Katniss is at her most vulnerable, shedding that demeanor that Haymitch describes as "sullen and hostile" (Collins, 2008, p. 116). The reason for this change in this story is that it helps to describe Katniss as more open and loving. When compared to Collins's Katniss who struggles with being open with her

feelings, this fanner's Katniss is characterized as more content and happy with her life.

She is the result of the character that Collins suggests Katniss is becoming at the conclusion of *Mockingjay*.

...I know this would have happened anyway. That what I need to survive is not Gale's fire, kindled with rage and hatred. I have plenty of fire myself. What I need is the dandelion in the spring. The bright yellow that means rebirth instead of destruction. The promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses. That it can be good again. And only Peeta can give me that.

(p. 388)

With Prim not dying, this fanner's Katniss is more able to become the woman that Peeta realizes that he would rather die than live without.

Summary Analysis. Entering the storyworld through an alternate universe allows a fanner to recreate a story in two different ways, character dislocation and genre shifting. While the characters in this story are not given new names and identities typical of most character dislocation fan fiction, their fates have been altered from the original: Prim does not die, fellow tribute and friend Finnick Odair also does not die in the Capitol, but rather after the birth of his second child, District Seven Tribute Johanna Mason does die, leaving only her brother Blight behind, who is not her brother in the original, but instead just her fellow tribute from her district. While these changes are minor when compared to the overall fan fiction piece, they do allow for the manipulation of an alternate universe where the genre shifting is evident, allowing for the focus on the emotional intensification of Katniss and Peeta's love.

Writing a fan fiction story through genre shifting allows a fanner to focus on a particular aspect of the story; in this case, it is the relationship between Katniss and Peeta, outside of a war between the Capitol and the Districts. With this lens on their

relationship, the story explores the love between the characters through Peeta's perspective, allowing for an emotional intensification of the story, another of Jenkins's techniques for changing a storyworld. This angst-ridden story explores Peeta's love for Katniss on a deeper level, suggesting that without her, he is unable to survive.

"Peeta, I love you so much. So much. And I want you to go on with your life. Without me."

"No. There is no life without you," he whimpered. He could tell Katniss was crying again.

"Peeta. Yes there is. I love you so much, but you need to continue. Become an artist. Go to Mexico. Peeta. I need you to know that you are the best thing that ever happened to me. You were my future."

"And you were mine." He could hear her crying.

"Peeta, it hurts." This killed him. This broke his heart. He couldn't stand seeing her in pain, but knowing that she was suffering when she died, that made him want to die too. A long, painful death, anything to switch places with Katniss, or be there along with her.

(wouldratherbeaunicorn, "As Soon as I can")

This is a clear connection to the original story, since in it, Katniss saves Peeta a few times: by saving his leg from a blood infection, with a handful of poisonous berries, and bringing him back emotionally from his hijacking from the Capitol. Reminiscent of the tragic love between Romeo and Juliet, this story implies that Katniss and Peeta together are whole, but without the other, one cannot survive, supporting the belief that "fan reading practices place such importance on issues of character motivation and psychology, fans often emphasize moments of narrative crisis" (Jenkins, 2013, p. 174).

Through review of the fan fiction stories, it can be seen that most fanners, when entering the storyworld through a type of alternate universe, do not include many of the characteristics of dystopian fiction noted by Scholes and Ostenson (2013); "As Long as I Can" includes only the trait of the romantic relationship. Similar to many other romantic relationships found in dystopian stories, the characters are driven apart by either society

or fate, evident in this story through the death of Katniss. Despite the lack of adherence to many of the characteristics of the dystopian genre, the story does remain consistent to the interwoven theme throughout the original of the powerful effect that love has on the main characters' motivations and actions.

“Cookie Crumbs” by VictoriaAntoine: Expanding the Series Timeline, Refocalization, Moral Realignment (Full Story Available in Appendix B)

Context of the Original Storyworld. Effie Trinket is known as the Capitol escort to Katniss and Peeta during their games. Described throughout the first book as being more concerned with appearances and the popularity of her charges, Effie allows readers a view of a Capitol citizen, up close and personal. It is not until *Catching Fire* that the love she has for Katniss and Peeta is evident.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. Utilizing vivid verbs and expressive adjectives, “Cookie Crumbs” by VictoriaAntoine encompasses the world of the Capitol as seen through the innocent eyes of a young girl. Unnamed until the very end, this young girl watches the Hunger Games unfold on TV along with her mother. When she asks if the people are real or just a movie, her mother questions what she has been learning in school, chastising the girl for not listening, as it is a part of the Capitol's school curriculum to teach students about the Dark Days, the uprising of the districts against the Capitol. Following the defeat of districts, and the destruction of District Thirteen, the Treaty of Treason created new laws to insure peace, along with the annual reminder of the Hunger Games that the Dark Days should never occur again. Throughout the story, readers are introduced to life in the Capitol in a way that is missing in The Hunger Games series due to Collins's use of Katniss's first person perspective. Due to Katniss's

perspective, life in the Capitol is only described with contempt; however, this story provides readers with an opportunity to witness an element of the games and Capitol life that is alluded to, but not expanded upon: the treatment of Avoxes and the games as simply televised entertainment.

The related themes of power, wealth distribution, and the concept of reality are evident when juxtaposed to story elements of the Avox servants, as well as to the games themselves. Although not named as an Avox in the fan fiction story, it is evident that the servant, Jebb, is in fact one. Not being allowed to talk to them or about them relates to Collins's use of these characters within the original storyworld, as they represent those who have been found guilty of a crime, and are sentenced to a life of servitude, with the loss of their tongues. While asking for a cookie while watching the games, the little girl begins to question where Jebb is from, and if he has a family, connecting it to the children she has witnessed killed in the games thus far. When she returns to the games, and sees yet another death, she begins to cry, confusing her mother as to why. It is not until the little girl returns to the kitchen to throw her cookies away that we learn her name as her mother calls after her, Effie.

"Cookie Crumbs", illustrating an Effie who is concerned about her servant, the Avox named Jebb, differs from *The Hunger Games* Effie, who appears appalled by the idea of Katniss being familiar with an Avox. While watching the games with her mother, Effie goes to the kitchen for a snack. While there, she questions Jebb about his family.

"Jebb." It was barely more than a whisper. The servant glanced at her, a nervous look in his eyes. "Jebb, are you from the Capitol? Or from one of the districts?" Jebb shook his head and held the plate closer to her. But she stamped her foot, just a little. "Jebb, I want to know." He glanced toward the doorway.... Jebb looked back at the little girl. He held up his

gloved hand, pushed it forward twice, and then held up a single finger. The little girl cocked her head.

"Eleven? You're from District Eleven." The servant nodded slightly. The girl's hand removed the slightly crumbled cookies from the platter, and the servant stood up. The girl thought for a moment, then stood on her tiptoes. "Jebs," she whispered. "Jebs, if that was your home...why didn't you stay there?" Jebs' eyes slowly turned red and wet. He struggled with a sound, something between sobbing and coughing. With a quick bow, he turned away....

"Mommy, did Jebs have a mommy and daddy?" Her mother's eyes widened, but she smiled tightly.

"Why, dear," she said. "You're not to talk to the servants, or about them. What's gotten into you? Now hush. Look, it's getting exciting."

(VictoriaAntoine, "Cookie Crumbs")

While this may seem like the mild curiosity of a little girl, this story illustrates that although most Capitol citizens are characterized as heartless and unconcerned with district tributes, citizens, and servants, they do not always begin this way. Young Effie did not share the attitude of her mother within "Cookie Crumbs", but throughout her life, something changed so that when introduced in *The Hunger Games*, she has become more like her mother.

"Don't be ridiculous, Katniss. How could you possibly know an Avox?" snaps Effie. "The very thought."

"What's an Avox?" I ask stupidly.

"Someone who committed a crime. They cut her tongue so she can't speak," says Haymitch. "She's probably a traitor of some sort. Not likely you'd know her."

"And even if you did, you're not to speak to one of them unless it's to give an order," says Effie. "Of course, you don't really know her."

(Collins, 2008, pp. 77-78)

"Cookie Crumbs" also includes a view of Capitol life while watching the games.

When asking if the tributes are dying for real – a question often asked throughout *Mockingjay*, "Real or not real?" (Collins, 2010, p. 274) – Effie's mother replies with "Yes, of course dear," indicating that although viewed as entertainment, she recognizes that children are dying (VictoriaAntoine). This knowledge means less to her however

than losing money does, as seen when a tribute dies, causing her to lose a bet, as she states, “I knew I shouldn’t make decisions at the last minute, I just got so excited. Anyway, I only bet thirty.” As Effie walks away crying, her mother calls after her “Enough already! They’re only games” further supporting the belief that she views the games, the tributes, and their deaths, as simply entertainment (VictoriaAntoine).

Summary Analysis. As readers of the original texts, we create our own reasons as to why Effie believes what she does about the Capitol, but “Cookie Crumbs” challenges these beliefs by creating a backstory vignette that introduces us to a little girl who is the antithesis of who we are first introduced to within the series.

Entering the storyworld by expanding the series timeline and refocalizing an already rounded character into a more dynamic one allows the fanner to explore Effie’s character psychology. While the fanner remains true to the original storyworld, not altering any of Collin’s world, she proceeds with an exploration of the story offering her own ideas as to what kind of life Effie had, and how her backstory may have led her to become the character she is in the series. This could easily have been written into the original story as a memory due to its detailed imitation of the original written storyworld.

An interesting aspect of this particular fan fiction story is the backstory of Effie as a young girl; specifically the moral realignment – enabling a fanner to question the moral positions of the character – of the character Effie when compared to the original storyworld. Contrasted to her characterization in the first novel, this story causes a reader to question how and why Effie changed from a seemingly empathetic young girl to a typical Capitol citizen, more concerned with the glitz and glamor of the games.

While created as a backstory of Effie, set apart from the actual games of the novel, the story includes quite a few of Scholes and Ostenson's identified dystopian characteristics, due to the use of the original texts as a guide for the setting of the story. Utilizing the original aspects of Collin's imagined dystopia, this fanfiction develops a story set in this already created world, building on and exploring the dystopic themes of: pressure to conform, attempts to erase or revise history, limited or complete lack of individual freedom, and people divided into groups. While not adding any of her own, she effortlessly incorporates these themes into a newly imagined backstory that further develops the character, allowing for a deeper understanding of Effie's possible character motivations.

“Exposed Memories” by Leprechaun’s Fairy: Recontextualization, Emotional Intensification, Eroticization (Full Story Available in Appendix C)

Context of the Original Storyworld. Leading up to the events that unfold in “Exposed Memories”, a recall of events from the series is necessary. Captured by the Capitol in the end of *Catching Fire*, readers learn in *Mockingjay* of Peeta's subjection to the Capitol's rewriting of his memories. Once rescued and reunited with Katniss, he attempts to strangle her. Trying to make sense of his actions, their fellow tribute Beetee explains Peeta's aversion of Katniss to her.

“Recall is made more difficult because memories can be changed.” Beetee taps his forehead. “Brought to the forefront of your mind, altered, and saved again in the revised form. Now imagine that I ask you to remember something — either with a verbal suggestion or by making you watch a tape of the event — and while that experience is refreshed, I give you a dose of tracker-jacker venom. Not enough to induce a three-day blackout. Just enough to infuse the memory with fear and doubt. And that's what your brain puts in long-term storage.”

I start to feel sick. Prim asks the question that's in my mind. "Is that what they've done to Peeta? Taken his memories of Katniss and distorted them so they're scary?"

Beetee nods. "So scary that he'd see her as life-threatening. That he might try to kill her. Yes, that's our current theory."

I cover my face with my arms because this isn't happening. It isn't possible. For someone to make Peeta forget he loves me . . . no one could do that.

(Collins, 2010, p. 181)

Throughout the remainder of the original text, Katniss and others work with Peeta to remind him of his past, helping him to understand what is "real or not real" (Collins, 2010, p. 272). It is this idea of helping to bring some of Peeta's memories back that "Exposed Memories" expands upon.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. While many of the chosen fan fiction stories illustrate elements of distress within the characters, one goes a step further to describe Peeta's turmoil after being rescued from the Capitol, as the others, especially Katniss, try to break through the hijacking done to his memories. Building on the dystopian elements found in the original storyworld – media manipulation, erasing or revising history, and abused advance sin technology – "Exposed Memories" by Leprechaun's Fairy brings readers into the storyworld through a focus on Katniss, Haymitch, and others, brainstorming ideas of how they may break through the Capitol's hijacking, a "type of fear conditioning", of Peeta's memories (Collins, 2010, p. 180). Expanding on this scene, "Exposed Memories" is a vignette of what may have occurred while trying to bring Peeta back to himself. This recontextualization of the storyworld in itself does not disrupt the original story; however, it does require the characters to act differently if the story was to continue. In the original text, Katniss is unable to help Peeta regain his memories, and they never fully reconcile until the very end of *Mockingjay*. "Exposed Memories"

changes this by Katniss reminding Peeta of a night they shared together, sharing a memory that the Capitol was unable to corrupt.

Beginning after Peeta's attempt of strangling Katniss, a group is meeting to discuss how they might go about helping him. Haymitch leads the discussion by asking whether or not this will help since he has memories, but "they're just fu--", then being cut off by District Thirteen's President Coin (Leprechaun's Fairy). The fanfic's use of Haymitch's almost use of the word fuck is contradictory to Collins's own writing within the novel. Although Haymitch Abernathy is a character imagined to use colorful language often, Collins, through Katniss's narration, limits the description of his illustrative vocabulary by offering a more child friendly paraphrasing – "Spewing profanity, he slashes the air a few moments before coming to his senses" (Collins, 2009, p. 14). While this characterization of Haymitch through how he speaks is similar to the original storyworld's Haymitch, it demonstrates a difference in the writing style in regards to the actual words used and by whom. As Collins's employs a first person point-of-view with Katniss as narrator, she shows readers that Haymitch employs some inappropriate language at times, through Katniss's description of the action. "Exposed Memories" on the other hand utilizes a third person omniscient point-of-view, negating the use of Katniss shielding readers from the profanity.

As the group begins brainstorming, they realize that due to the Capitol's constant surveillance of the tributes, there are not many memories to share with Peeta that the Capitol would not have corrupted. It is when Effie states that she made sure that there were no cameras in the Tribute Center bedrooms and bathrooms during the Quarter Quell that Katniss realizes that she may hold a memory that the Capitol cannot know about.

After asking Effie if the wedding dress Cinna, Katniss's stylist in the Capitol, had designed had been saved, Katniss refuses to say any more, frustrating Haymitch.

When Effie returns with the dress, Katniss smiles as she finds the small silk garment bag that is placed in the box. Taking the bag with her, she leaves the room with no one but Prim, leaving the others curious about what this could all mean. Incorporating a chapter break within the story, Chapter 2 begins with Katniss about to walk in to Peeta's room. Prim, understanding how Katniss is going to remind Peeta of a memory, jokingly states "...I'll try and make sure Gale doesn't try to beat down the door when he figures it out" (Leprechaun's Fairy). Incorporating the love triangle between Katniss, Peeta, and Gale found in the original texts, novels and films, this fanfic, through foreshadowing, implies that the memory between Katniss and Peeta will be romantic in nature since Gale possibly will become jealous.

As Katniss walks in to his room, Peeta tenses up, ready for a fight, but then slumps in resignation, asking "So are you also here to tell me stories of my family and the district you destroyed?", allowing Katniss a chance to sit with him (Leprechaun's Fairy). She then begins recounting what happened after they left District Twelve for the Quarter Quell where they both were to be tributes again, leading to the night of the tribute interviews when Peeta lies to the audience about Katniss being pregnant, as he tries to garner sympathy so that the games may be cancelled. In the original storyworld, Katniss describes their last night together as one with them just holding one another throughout the night.

I'm certain that if a door shuts between us, it will lock and I'll have to spend the night without him....I refuse to let go of his hand.

Do we sleep? I don't know. We spend the night holding each other, in some halfway land between dreams and waking. Not talking.

(Collins, 2008, p. 268)

It is at this point in the original that Leprechaun's Fairy further elaborates on the storyworld through a recontextualization of what happens between the two characters during this particular night throughout the remaining two chapters of the story.

Realizing that Katniss's jumpsuit is on backwards, a fact readers were given as she walked into the room, Peeta sneeringly states that nothing like that happened so it won't jog any memories. Frustrated, Katniss blurts "It's what's under the jumpsuit that matters!" (Leprechaun's Fairy). Being confused, Peeta allows Katniss to continue as she asks him to recount what he remembers from their last night in the Tribute Center. His only clear memory is that of Katniss pulling him in to her room, leaving the rest of the night as a blur. All he remembers is being exhausted the next morning, assuming that her plan was to "keep [him] up all night" so that he might be easier to kill in the arena (Leprechaun's Fairy). Noting the double entendre, both blush at his statement. It is important to note that this fanfiction seamlessly incorporates Collins's characterizations of Katniss and Peeta through the descriptions of their actions and thoughts. Collins's Katniss is reserved emotionally throughout the series, seldom showing others her feelings; she herself struggles with her own feelings as she tries to navigate through how she feels about Peeta. Leprechaun's Fairy builds upon this emotional distance, as well as Peeta's uncomfortableness with Katniss's candor, with descriptions like "Peeta fidgeted in his chair and Katniss had to wonder if it was...the strangeness of her being so emotional that was making him uncomfortable" (Leprechaun's Fairy).

After locking the door from the inside by placing a chair under the handle, Katniss reminds Peeta of her asking him to unzip her dress the night after the interviews,

as she turns to have him mimic the action with her backwards turned jumpsuit. It is now when the story begins to incorporate a level of eroticization that is not found within the books, or the films. When Peeta non-so-gently unbuttons her jumpsuit, he suddenly stops, murmuring, “This can’t be right, I would have remembered”, prompting Katniss to ask what he remembers (Leprechaun’s Fairy). Echoing his past self, Peeta almost repeats exactly what he had said the night of the interviews as he helped Katniss out of the wedding dress President Snow had forced her to wear, “Sunset orange. Your...undergarments are sunset orange” (Leprechaun’s Fairy). Referencing back to a conversation between Katniss and Peeta *Mockingjay*, this fanfic continues her story with aspects from the original.

At a few minutes before four, Peeta turns to me again. “Your favorite color . . . it’s green?”

“That’s right.” Then I think of something to add. “And yours is orange.”

“Orange?” He seems unconvinced.

“Not bright orange. But soft. Like the sunset,” I say. “At least, that’s what you told me once.”

“Oh.” He closes his eyes briefly, maybe trying to conjure up that sunset, then nods his head. “Thank you.”

(Collins, 2010, p. 271)

Chapter 3 ends with Katniss and Peeta stumbling “towards one another, her arms around him and his around her and he whispered it all in her ear so nobody else would hear. And she nodded and cried into his shoulder because he remembered it all exactly like it had happened” (Leprechaun’s Fairy). Departing from a chronological telling, Chapter 4 begins with Gale rushing to the door as Katniss locks it with the chair. The others – Haymitch, Effie, Katniss’s mother, fellow tributes Finnick and Johanna – look on in anticipation of how Peeta will react, as Prim tries to calm everyone, whispering “We’re all going to be fine” (Leprechaun’s Fairy). Most of Chapter 4 is a flashback of Katniss

and Peeta in her bedroom in the Tribute Center, the night before the Quarter Quell, with the last three paragraphs bringing readers back to the present.

Summary Analysis. With the story being rated T, translated on Fanfiction.net to mean being suitable for older teens, 13 years and older, which allows for some violence, minor coarse language, and minor suggestive adult themes, the use of euphemisms for their body parts is understood. The story utilizes euphemisms like “intimate areas”, “touching him *there* [emphasis added]”, and “the one place she suddenly realized she was very curious about”. Rather than stating that Peeta is sexually aroused in the shower with an erection, Leprechaun’s Fairy instead uses the pronoun *it*.

They helped each other wash their hair and it might not have led to anything more. Then Peeta slipped right when they went to step out of the shower stall.

Katniss automatically reached out to help steady him and next thing she knew her back was pressed against the wall of the shower and Peeta was somehow pressed against her front.

They both froze at the contact and Peeta looked at her with wide eyes. "I'm sorry," he whispered and stepped away. He didn't say anything else as he carefully stepped out of the stall, pulled the towel off the rack, and wrapped it around his waist.

Katniss couldn't help but blush and smile as she reached for her own towel. She knew why Peeta had apologized and it hadn't been because he'd tripped and taken her with him. It had been the fact that he'd very much enjoyed the shower, so much so that she'd felt *it* against her belly when they'd hit the wall.

(Leprechaun’s Fairy, “Exposed Memories”)

While most readers will understand the meaning beneath the euphemisms, it is interesting that this fanner chose to not be more specific with the language. Whether it is due to Fanfiction.net’s guidelines surrounding the ratings of stories, or whether it is due to the fanner attempting to include the act of sex between Katniss and Peeta, while trying to stay faithful to Collins’s scenes that leave room for a reader’s imagination, the story sets itself apart from the originals with the inclusion of this act.

While the remainder of the story is not explicit in the description of a shower scene and implied sex between Katniss and Peeta, I believe it does rate a categorizing of the technique of eroticization. It is much more sexual in nature than any descriptions within Collins's original work, taking the relationship between the two characters to a sexual, as well as romantic, level that is not developed in the storyworld.

Leprechaun's Fairy explores an element of Katniss and Peeta's relationship that Collins leaves to the imagination of the readers. Focusing on two seventeen-year-old main characters, it is not surprising to find fan fiction stories that delve into the possible actions between two teenagers. Fan fiction offers ways for fanners to explore their own feelings through the writing of their exploration of these feelings through the actions of characters.

“Fate is a Fickle Thing” by Ellana-san: Refocalization, Character Dislocation, Eroticization (Full Story Available in Appendix D)

Context of the Original Storyworld. Haymitch Abernathy is the mentor, and later friend, to Katniss and Peeta during their foray into the Hunger Games, while Effie Trinket is their escort through the Capitol as they gain popularity as District Twelve Tributes and as new Victors. Both travel with Katniss and Peeta throughout the majority of their journey; Haymitch stays with them until the end, but Effie's fate after Katniss escapes the arena in *Catching Fire* is unknown in the novels, until she reappears at the end of *Mockingjay*. Kept prisoner by the Capitol until the end of the war, she is then released to help Katniss prepare for President Snow's execution. The movie storyworld though has changed Effie's fate, having her to reunite with them all in District Thirteen at the beginning of the rebellion, during the film *Mockingjay, Part One*. Although a

relationship between Haymitch and Effie Trinket is not explored throughout the texts, some fanners choose to expand on this couple's relationship throughout their writings.

As *The Hunger Games* begins, Haymitch Abernathy is the only District Twelve Victor still alive. Winning the Hunger Games during the last Quarter Quell, twenty-four years before the beginning of the first novel, Haymitch is known throughout the Districts and the Capitol as a drunk. Readers are first introduced to him during the Reaping Ceremony in which Katniss volunteers to take her sister Prim's place in the games. Katniss describes his entrance into the story as "a paunchy, middle-aged man, who at this moment appears hollering something unintelligible....He's drunk. Very" (Collins, 2008, p. 19). During Katniss's first conversation with Haymitch, she comes to the realization that she hates him, though as the series progresses, she comes to better understand the reasoning's behind Haymitch's drinking, in turn feeling sympathy for the man who is trying to save her life.

This is a man who spent his adult life at the bottom of a bottle, trying to anesthetize himself against the Capitol's crimes. The sixteen-year-old boy who won the second Quarter Quell must have had people he loved – family, friends, a sweetheart maybe – that he fought to get back to. Where are they now? How is it that until Peeta and I were thrust upon him, there was no one at all in his life? What did Snow do to them?

(Collins, 2010, p. 166)

Katniss and Peeta struggle with Haymitch's drinking throughout *The Hunger Games*, with the hope that if he were sober, he would be more able to effectively mentor them before the games, and better suited for securing sponsors for them within the games.

I don't know Haymitch, but I've seen him often enough in the Hob, tossing handfuls of money on the counter of the woman who sells white liquor. He'll be incoherent by the time we reach the Capitol.

I realize I detest Haymitch. No wonder the District 12 tributes never stand a chance. It isn't just that we've been underfed and lack training. Some of our tributes have still been strong enough to make a go

of it. But we rarely get sponsors and he's a big part of the reason why. The rich people who back tributes – either because they're betting on them or simply for the bragging rights of picking a winner – expect someone classier than Haymitch to deal with.

(Collins, 2008, pg. 56)

Once home to District Twelve, and then throughout the rest of the series, they realize that they need Haymitch as much as he needs them, as they try to prove their love to President Snow while helping Haymitch through the next Quarter Quell.

With Katniss's first person point-of-view, Haymitch is primarily characterized through the interactions between the two. It is when Peeta's points out her and Haymitch's similarities that Katniss begins to better understand their relationship as mentor and tribute. Despite not being able to communicate with one another during the games, Katniss realizes that she and Haymitch are more in tune with one another than Haymitch and Peeta.

“Haymitch and I don't get along well in person, but maybe Peeta is right about us being alike because he seems able to communicate with me by the timing of his gifts.... He hasn't made much effort to connect with Peeta really. Perhaps he thinks a bowl of broth would just be a bowl of broth to Peeta, whereas I'll see the strings attached to it.”

(Collins, 2008, p. 259)

Haymitch's protection of Katniss continues throughout the series, with Katniss realizing his commitment to trying to save her while on the train for the Victor's Tour of the Districts in *Catching Fire*.

“Did you choose me, Haymitch?” I ask.

“Yeah,” he says.

“Why? You like him better,” I say.

“That's true. But remember, until they changed the rules, I could only hope to get one of you out of there alive,” he says. “I thought since he was determined to protect you, well, between the three of us, we might be able to bring you home.”

“Oh” is all I can think to say.

“You’ll see, the choices you’ll have to make. If we survive this,”
says Haymitch. “You’ll learn.”

(Collins, 2009, p. 67)

This close relationship is taken a step further within this chosen fan fiction story “Fate is a Fickle Thing”, with Haymitch holding the role of a father figure to Katniss.

As a contrast to Haymitch, Effie Trinket is “District 12’s escort, fresh from the Capitol with her scary white grin, pinkish hair, and spring green suit”, who is “bright and bubbly” (Collins, 2008, p. 18-19). Effie’s job is to make sure that Katniss and Peeta, and often Haymitch, follow their schedules, and that their appearances and attendance at parties is noted within the Capitol media. While Haymitch spends more time with Katniss and Peeta since he also lives next door to them in District Twelve, Effie is an important character who introduces them to the world of the Capitol, while offering readers insight into the actions and beliefs of Capitol citizens.

During Katniss and Peeta’s first trip to the Capitol, they are introduced to Effie’s lack of understanding of district life. While offering what she believed to be a compliment to Katniss and Peeta, she inadvertently insults them, while referencing the previous year’s District Twelve tributes.

“At least, you two have decent manners,” says Effie as we’re finishing the main course. “The pair last year ate everything with their hands like a couple of savages. It completely upset my digestion.”

The pair last year were two kids from the Seam who’d never, not one day of their lives, had enough to eat. And when they did have food, table manners were surely the last thing on their minds. Peeta’s a baker’s son. My mother taught Prim and me to eat properly, so yes, I can handle a fork and knife. But I hate Effie Trinket’s comment so much I make a point of eating the rest of my meal with my fingers. Then I wipe my hands on the tablecloth. This makes her purse her lips tightly together.

(Collins, 2008, pp. 44-45)

This exchange underscores the use of Effie representing a typical Capitol citizen. Failing to recognize what life in the districts is like, Effie instead looks upon the previous tributes hungrily eating as a sign of their lack of cultivated manners. While she believes that she is praising Katniss and Peeta, she is actually demonstrating the difference of her life compared to theirs.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. With a romantic relationship between these two characters not explored within the stories, there are many fan fiction writers who choose to create one, thus creating *Hayffie* fan fiction. One such example is “Fate is a Fickle Thing” by Ellana-San. Entering the storyworld through a refocalization focused on these two characters, this fan fiction author also uses the alternate universe technique of character dislocation to guide a story set outside of Collins’s parameters of the original. Adding another layer to their relationship, Ellana-San also includes an element of eroticization to the story, taking the actions between Effie and Haymitch to a more mature level.

In the original texts, both Haymitch and Effie act as guardians and friends of both Katniss and Peeta. Building upon this relationship, Ellana-San sets “Fate is a Fickle Thing” in an alternate universe with commercial airlines, cars, and cell phones. Both Effie and Haymitch find themselves fighting for the last seat on a plane headed to Richmond, Virginia – Effie to visit her nephew and Haymitch to visit his daughter. Their first impressions of one another mimic their appearances within the novels, as well as the films. With Haymitch described with “grey eyes, dirty blond hair that was much too long and unstyled, stubble that covered his chin and jaw, clothes that clearly had seen better days”, Woody Harrelson comes to mind with his role within the films (Ellana-San, “Fate

is a Fickle Thing”). Effie also stays true to her characterization with her “usual poise and good education” being challenged as she is seen “throwing a bitch fit like a spoiled little brat” (Ellana-San, “Fate is a Fickle Thing”).

Through their fighting over the last seat, they learn that they are both traveling past Richmond to the Seam, which is known as the poorest area of District Twelve, the place where Katniss lives in the first novel (Collins, 2008, p. 5). There, Haymitch is to attend his daughter’s engagement party. In his conversations with Effie, readers come to learn that “She’s not my [Haymitch’s] daughter. She’s my kid but not my daughter” (Ellana-san, “Fate is a Fickle Thing”). This father-daughter bond within the story mirrors the relationship between these two characters that Collins begins to develop in the original, this closeness that goes beyond the mentor-tribute connection. In a large coincidence, Effie also is heading to the Seam to meet her nephew’s fiancé. While it is clear that the daughter and the nephew are Katniss and Peeta, readers do not discover this until the end of the story when Effie and Haymitch learn of it.

Haymitch, unable to rent a car due to his drunken state, finds himself stranded at the airport while Effie is about to leave in her rental. Overhearing Haymitch’s exchange with his daughter, Effie remembers her manners and offers him a ride.

"No. Listen, kid, I tried, there's no flight before noon." He paused long enough to draw a breath and run a shaky hand in his hair. "I tried, I can't drive." Another pause and, this time, he winced. "No, I'm not drunk. I just had two drinks. You know I hate flying. Come on, sweetheart, don't be like that. Yeah, I know your mom isn't coming. Yeah, I... Look, I know I promised, I didn't want to miss your engagement either, I... Hello? Girl?" He looked at his phone in dismay and kicked a nearby car in anger.

(Ellana-San, “Fate is a Fickle Thing”)

Before even getting on the road, the tension continues with Effie asking Haymitch if anyone has ever told him that he is “awfully ill-behaved”, with him offering a retort of

“Did anyone ever tell you you’re awfully uptight?” Haymitch further frustrates Effie when questioning if she is from the Seam. When she replies that she is not, Haymitch continues the conversation with commenting that she is “hot for an uptight bitch” (Ellana-San, “Fate is a Fickle Thing”). In the original series, no one uses profanity. It may be implied, but never actually stated. Haymitch’s comment to Effie is true to his characterization, but not to Collins’s writing.

Their trip continues in relative peace, until Effie realizes that the directions Haymitch gave caused them to become lost. Stopping on the side of the road, Effie leaves the car to clear her head. Haymitch, for a reason implied but not expanded upon, panics and grabs Effie to pull her back to the car. It is here when the tension between the two becomes sexual, as Effie realizes that although she is almost pinned to the car, she does not mind it so much, as “her mouth watered as her body slowly reacted to his unexpected proximity.” Continuing their banter, Effie attempts to remind herself that this is not a good idea, telling Haymitch that he is “rude and vulgar and insufferable.” Not to be put off, Haymitch mocks, “Got a thing for bad boys, sweetheart?” Recognizing that they both cannot resist a challenge, they give in to their desires.

...she grabbed the lapels of his coat and tugged. Their mouths crashed together, their noses bumped, his stubble scratched her skin, and there were far too many teeth involved but it was strangely perfect in its messiness. Before she understood what was happening, he had her pinned to the car, her legs were wrapped around his waist and she couldn't tell if they were kissing or fighting for control.

His hands were wandering under her clothes, kneading and stroking her flesh in turn, and she was tearing at his coat and shirt, trying to access his skin....Far from being entirely distracted, she fumbled around for the car door handle and managed to open the door to the backseat. Then she buried her fingers in his hair and tugged firmly enough that he stopped kissing her to look at her, obviously amused by her antics. "Inside the car. Now."

"Bossy." he commented.

She wasn't sure if it was a good thing or a bad thing but he was smirking when he tossed her on the backseat.

(Ellana-San, "Fate is a Fickle Thing")

As they lay in each other's arms after sex, Haymitch offers to let Effie sleep some. When she questions men's lack of desire for cuddling, Haymitch responds with "...fuck the usual protocol." As he says it again a few sentences later, this adds up to Haymitch using profanity four times within this story, which is not so much outside the realm of the original storyworld when compared to the sexual acts that occur between the two.

Summary Analysis. Creating a relationship between these two characters is not so much outside the realm of possibility when looking at the Collins's descriptions of the relationship between them; however, the depictions of their sexual acts are the antithesis of Collins's writing, or even the movie adaptations, which do not include any aspect of sexual relations between the characters. Whereas many fan fiction stories will include an element of eroticization, this particular instance sets this story apart from the majority of the other chosen fan fiction stories, as they are mainly focus on the emotional relationships between the characters, and not on the physical.

While "Fate is a Fickle Thing" does not fit within the genres of the original texts, it does illustrate an aspect of reality when set in our world. The language and actions of the two characters are not outside the realm of normality that represents the world of two adults, brought together in close proximity. The refocalization on Effie and Haymitch allows Ellana-san to explore the relationship of these two adults that Collins left for the imagination of readers. Set on the actions of adults, the eroticization element adds a delineation between what is categorized as young adult fiction, as well as what is

acceptable within novels targeted towards younger readers. Older teens as well as adults reading Collins's original work may have read between the lines to interpret sexual interactions between characters; however, Collins did not include any. Using only Katniss's point-of-view in the texts, readers only recognize what Katniss sees for herself, and with her focused primarily on saving herself, as well as others around her, she has little time to give to the thoughts concerning the relationships of others; she has a difficult enough of a time trying to determine her own feelings, rather than worrying about theirs.

“Hide and Seek” by sponsormusings: Expanding the Series Timeline, Refocalization (Full Story Available in Appendix E)

Context of the Original Storyworld. In The Hunger Games series, as well as movies, readers are given a small glimpse of Peeta's family. When Peeta is chosen as tribute, Katniss mentions Peeta's two older brothers; however, she implies in her narrative that his family, like many other families in District Twelve, is not as close as hers.

He has two older brothers, I know, I've seen them in the bakery, but one is probably too old now to volunteer and the other won't. This is standard. Family devotion only goes so far for most people on reaping day. What I did was the radical thing.

(Collins, 2008, p. 26)

This difference between Katniss and Peeta's family is further developed when Katniss recalls the rainy day, when Peeta throws her a loaf of bread, after he is beaten by his mother for burning it. It is this memory that originally drives Katniss's sense of responsibility of owing something to Peeta. She sees it as he saved her life, and she now must do what she can to save his.

On the afternoon of my encounter with Peeta Mellark, the rain was falling in relentless icy sheets. I had been in town, trying to trade some

threadbare old baby clothes of Prim's in the public market, but there were no takers. Although I had been to the Hob on several occasions with my father, I was too frightened to venture into that rough, gritty place alone. The rain had soaked through my father's hunting jacket, leaving me chilled to the bone. For three days, we'd had nothing but boiled water with some old dried mint leaves I'd found in the back of a cupboard. By the time the market closed, I was shaking so hard I dropped my bundle of baby clothes in a mud puddle. I didn't pick it up for fear I would keel over and be unable to regain my feet. Besides, no one wanted those clothes.

I couldn't go home. Because at home was my mother with her dead eyes and my little sister, with her hollow cheeks and cracked lips. I couldn't walk into that room with the smoky fire from the damp branches I had scavenged at the edge of the woods after the coal had run out, my hands empty of any hope.

I found myself stumbling along a muddy lane behind the shops that serve the wealthiest townspeople. The merchants live above their businesses, so I was essentially in their backyards. I remember the outlines of garden beds not yet planted for the spring, a goat or two in a pen, one sodden dog tied to a post, hunched defeated in the muck.

All forms of stealing are forbidden in District 12. Punishable by death. But it crossed my mind that there might be something in the trash bins, and those were fair game. Perhaps a bone at the butcher's or rotted vegetables at the grocer's, something no one but my family was desperate enough to eat. Unfortunately, the bins had just been emptied.

When I passed the baker's, the smell of fresh bread was so overwhelming I felt dizzy. The ovens were in the back, and a golden glow spilled out the open kitchen door. I stood mesmerized by the heat and the luscious scent until the rain interfered, running its icy fingers down my back, forcing me back to life. I lifted the lid to the baker's trash bin and found it spotlessly, heartlessly bare.

Suddenly a voice was screaming at me and I looked up to see the baker's wife, telling me to move on and did I want her to call the Peacekeepers and how sick she was of having those brats from the Seam pawing through her trash. The words were ugly and I had no defense. As I carefully replaced the lid and backed away, I noticed him, a boy with blond hair peering out from behind his mother's back. I'd seen him at school. He was in my year, but I didn't know his name. He stuck with the town kids, so how would I? His mother went back into the bakery, grumbling, but he must have been watching me as I made my way behind the pen that held their pig and leaned against the far side of an old apple tree. The realization that I'd have nothing to take home had finally sunk in. My knees buckled and I slid down the tree trunk to its roots. It was too much. I was too sick and weak and tired, oh, so tired. *Let them call the Peacekeepers and take us to the community home, I thought. Or better yet, let me die right here in the rain.*

There was a clatter in the bakery and I heard the woman screaming again and the sound of a blow, and I vaguely wondered what was going on. Feet sloshed toward me through the mud and I thought, *It's her. She's coming to drive me away with a stick.* But it wasn't her. It was the boy. In his arms, he carried two large loaves of bread that must have fallen into the fire because the crusts were scorched black.

His mother was yelling, "Feed it to the pig, you stupid creature! Why not? No one decent will buy burned bread!"

He began to tear off chunks from the burned parts and toss them into the trough, and the front bakery bell rung and the mother disappeared to help a customer.

The boy never even glanced my way, but I was watching him. Because of the bread, because of the red weal that stood out on his cheekbone. What had she hit him with? My parents never hit us. I couldn't even imagine it. The boy took one look back to the bakery as if checking that the coast was clear, then, his attention back on the pig, he threw a loaf of bread in my direction. The second quickly followed, and he sloshed back to the bakery, closing the kitchen door tightly behind him.

(Collins, 2008, pp. 28-31)

This is the only time when Mrs. Mellark is mentioned directly in the story with any interaction with Katniss; however, Peeta provides readers another insight into his relationship with his mother when in the Training Center, in the Capitol, as he relates his mother's view concerning Katniss and the games.

"...You know what my mother said to me when she came to say good-bye, as if to cheer me up, she says maybe District Twelve will finally have a winner. Then I realized, she didn't mean me, she meant you!" bursts out Peeta.

"Oh, she meant you," I say with a wave of dismissal.

"She said, 'She's a survivor, that one.' She is," says Peeta.

That pulls me up short. Did his mother really say that about me? Did she rate me over her son? I see the pain in Peeta's eyes and know he isn't lying.

Suddenly I'm behind the bakery and I can feel the chill of the rain running down my back, the hollowness in my belly. I sound eleven years old when I speak. "But only because someone helped me."

(Collins, 2008, p. 90)

Peeta, being compassionate and caring, more resembles his father, based on the few instances when he is present in the story. His first and only time interacting with Katniss directly in the text is when he visits her after she volunteers as tribute, and is about to leave for the Capitol.

...But we do know each other a bit, and he knows Prim even better. When she sells her goat cheeses at the Hob, she puts two of them aside for him and he gives her a generous amount of bread in return. We always wait to trade with him when his witch of a wife isn't around because he's so much nicer. I feel certain he would never have hit his son the way she did over the burned bread. But why has he come to see me?

The baker sits awkwardly on the edge of one of the plush chairs. He's a big, broad-shouldered man with burn scars from years at the ovens. He must have just said good-bye to his son.

He pulls a white paper package from his jacket pocket and holds it out to me. I open it and find cookies. These are a luxury we can never afford.

"Thank you," I say. The baker's not a very talkative man in the best of times, and today he has no words at all. "I had some of your bread this morning. My friend Gale gave you a squirrel for it." He nods, as if remembering the squirrel. "Not your best trade," I say. He shrugs as if it couldn't possibly matter.

Then I can't think of anything else, so we sit in silence until a Peacemaker summons him. He rises and coughs to clear his throat. "I'll keep an eye on the little girl. Make sure she's eating."

(Collins, 2008, p. 37-38)

Readers are never provided a clear reasoning as to why Mr. Mellark visits Katniss; however, near the end of the games, while taking shelter in the cave, Peeta shares his first memory of Katniss, of the moment when he fell in love with her.

"Peeta," I say lightly. "You said at the interview you'd had a crush on me forever. When did forever start?"

"Oh, let's see. I guess the first day of school. We were five. You had on a red plaid dress and your hair...it was in two braids instead of one. My father pointed you out when we were waiting to line up," Peeta says.

"Your father? Why?" I ask.

"He said, 'See that little girl? I wanted to marry her mother, but she ran off with a coal miner,'" Peeta says.

"What? You're making that up!" I exclaim.

“No, true story,” Peeta says. “And I said, ‘A coal miner? Why did she want a coal miner if she could’ve had you?’ And he said, ‘Because when he sings...even the birds stop to listen.’”

(Collins, 2008, p. 300)

Perhaps the love that Mr. Mellark once had for Katniss’s mother propels him to watch over Prim while Katniss is gone, but it is not a stretch of the imagination to believe that it is from his father that Peeta learned his compassion and love.

As the series draws to a close, readers discover that Peeta’s parents and brothers did not make it out of District Twelve before it was bombed, leaving Peeta alone. Upon the conclusion of the series, Peeta and Katniss return to District Twelve to rebuild their lives together. In the Epilogue, set almost twenty years after the revolution against the Capitol, Katniss watches her two children play in the meadow as she reflects on her life with Peeta. She worries constantly for her children, her daughter who has just begun school, and her toddler son, as she still wakes up during the nights from nightmares. It is during this time in their lives that fanfiction enters the storyworld.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. Participating in the world of fan fiction through the utilization of the techniques of expanding the series timeline and refocalization, fanfiction creates a story that explores Peeta’s past through the use of flashbacks juxtaposed to his present life with Katniss and his children.

Married and living in District Twelve Peeta and Katniss are raising their two children, Holly and Asher. Returning home from the bakery, Peeta begins a game of hide and seek with his children, which brings to mind a time he played it with his own father. Twenty minutes after not finding her, he asks Katniss if she has seen her.

"Can't find her?" Katniss fought to hold back her laugh.
"I can't," he admitted. "I've taught her too well."

Katniss smiled, rested her head back against the tiles. "Well, she's not in here. I guess she's learnt her Daddy's tricks for camouflage, huh?"

"I guess so," Peeta replied, then paused. Maybe...maybe he had taught her too well. "Actually, I think I know where she might be, and I can't believe I didn't think of it before now." How could he have not thought of it? It was so obvious - she was her father's daughter, after all.

"Well, you'd better go find her," Katniss said. "Before she falls asleep again like she did the first time she hid under Asher's cot."

"I will," Peeta assured her, closing the door behind him. He switched Asher to the other hip, moved back out into the hallway to the rarely used second utility closet at the end. His steps felt oddly heavy, his throat filling with a lump, his eyes blinking back tears as he reached the door. And as he opened it, crouched down, and saw Holly curled up on the bottom shelf, surrounded by blankets and a wide grin on her face, he felt himself transported back to a time that felt like an age ago.

Holly burst out, wrapped her arms around both him and Asher. "I win, daddy! You took forever!"

He slid into bed later that night, his heart both full and empty at the same time. Full of love for his children, and his wife. Empty for what he'd lost, who he no longer had with him.

(sponsormusings, "Hide and Seek")

Later that night, Peeta recalls the memories he has of his father, and of the one time he was able to win the game of hide and seek.

"You only played hide and seek with your dad?"

"And Aaran and Ethen. Mom would go once a month to have afternoon tea with some other ladies in town, and they'd drink tea and probably bitch about the ones who hadn't shown up that day. But we'd always make the most of it - bake cookies that would be just for us, or use some of the baking paper to draw on. Sometimes, though, he'd close the bakery early and we'd play hide and seek. I only ever won once - and I won by hiding at the bottom of the utility closet."

Katniss' hand drew across his stomach, drawing patterns across the skin. "It's a good memory to have, huh?" "It is," he said quietly, closing his eyes. "A very good one."

"Ahhhh, kiddo, you've gotten good at this - I can't believe I had to forfeit!" His dad wrapped an arm around his shoulders, a big smile on his face. "Nice hiding spot, son."

"Thanks dad." Peeta said happily. He couldn't believe his dad had to forfeit either!

"Just remember these places when you're grown up and a dad yourself," Nolan Mellark winked. "That way you'll be able to find them real quick."

Peeta grinned, wide and bright. "Yeah, I will! My kids will have no chance against me!"

His dad laughed and ruffled his hair, then led him back downstairs to the bakery so they could open up again.

He liked winning, Peeta decided firmly, raising his hands above his head in victory when he saw his brothers. Maybe one day he'd win a game again.

(sponsormusings, "Hide and Seek")

Summary Analysis. Sponsormusings's story provides insight to what life may have been like in the Mellark household. Based on the little amount of information that Collins provides, the descriptions of both parents are believable, as this fanfiction elaborates on the familial relationships that shaped Peeta.

Illustrated through the memories of Peeta, Mr. Mellark is seen as a loving father, who recognizes that he and his wife have different views when it comes to spending time with the children, as implied in Peeta's story of his father making the most of his time with his sons, by closing the bakery when his wife was gone once a month. Although not directly described as an unloving mother in the memory, when taken together with Katniss's memory concerning the bread, and Peeta's comment of her last words to him, Mrs. Mellark can be described as a bitter woman. Another reason for her actions, although not suggested in the texts but more through close and continued readings of the series, is that Mrs. Mellark recognizes that she was not her husband's first choice as a wife, as stated in Peeta's memory of asking his father about Katniss when he was five-years-old. This knowledge could have led her to become bitter throughout the years, possibly due to jealousy and insecurity.

These positive memories of his own father are what drive Peeta to cherish the time he has with his own family, while also lamenting his loss. As he lies down after playing with his children, he feels "[E]mpty for what he'd lost, who he no longer had with

him” (sponsormusings, “Hide and Seek”). They singular use of *who*, rather than the plural of *those*, expose his feelings of who he misses, his father. With the memory focused on his father, the use of the singular *who* describes a deliberate usage.

In the epilogue of *Mockingjay*, Katniss does not name her children, but sponsormusings adds this detail to the story. While at first glance the names of Holly and Asher may seem insignificant, it is important to note that these two names, like Katniss and Prim’s, are types of plants. Prim, short for Primrose, is named for the flowering plant, and Katniss is named for the aquatic plant that grows in District Twelve. Following this theme of names, Katniss and Peeta name their children after plants as well – Holly, a flowering plant that grows on trees and shrubs, and Asher, from the English name Ash, a flowering plant in the lilac family. With names being an important symbolic elements throughout the novels, sponsormusings demonstrates a level of deeper understanding through her choice of names for the children.

In the majority of the story, sponsormusings focuses on Peeta, with Katniss as a minor character. While she does not have many lines, there is one that contradicts Collins’s Katniss in the end of the series. In the epilogue, Katniss reflects on her children playing in the meadow, where many people in District Twelve died when it was bombed twenty years before. Through her reflections, readers are made aware that she still struggles with the haunting memories of the games, as well as of the rebellion against the Capitol. Even through all this time, she still worries about her happiness being taken away from her.

I’ll tell them how I survive it. I’ll tell them that on bad mornings, it feels impossible to take pleasure in anything because I’m afraid it could be taken away. That’s when I make a list in my head of every act of goodness

I've seen someone do. It's like a game. Repetitive. Even a little tedious after more than twenty years. But there are much worse games to play.
(Collins, 2010, p. 390)

Sponsormusings, in contrast to Collins, has Katniss make a reference to the Hunger Games in a fleeting manner, seemingly unperturbed by the memory. When asked if she has seen Holly, she responds to Peeta with "Well, she's not in here. I guess she's learnt her Daddy's tricks for camouflage, huh?" ("Hide and Seek"). When compared to Katniss in the Epilogue, sponsormusings's Katniss is one-dimensional, with none of the angst, hurt, and fear present in Collins's characterization.

Ending both stories, the series as well as this fan fiction, are lines that allude to the games, and the idea of games. In "Hide and Seek" the game itself has no darker meaning, but when compared to the series, it foreshadows what Peeta and Katniss would need to *play* in order to stay hidden from the other tributes. Taking the game motif that Collins's exercises throughout the original storyworld, sponsormusings develops a vignette that allows for a positive connotation of what it means to play a game. A young Peeta pondering if he "[M]aybe one day he'd win a game again" foreshadows the ultimate game he will ever play, while relating to Katniss's repetitive act of making a list of every act of goodness she has seen someone do, while thinking that "there are much worse games to play."

"In The Spring" by Wrtingwife83: Recontextualization, Expanding the Series Timeline, Genre Shifting (Full Story Available in Appendix F)

Context of the Original Storyworld. In the end of the series, in the last chapter of *Mockingjay*, Katniss explains her choice of Peeta, how she knows that she is meant to be with him.

Peeta and I grow back together. There are still moments when he clutches the back of a chair and hangs on until the flashbacks are over. I wake screaming from nightmares of mutts and lost children. But his arms are there to comfort me. And eventually his lips. On the night I feel that thing again, the hunger that overtook me on the beach, I know this would have happened anyway. That what I need to survive is not Gale's fire, kindled with rage and hatred. I have plenty of fire myself. What I need is the dandelion in the spring. The bright yellow that means rebirth instead of destruction. The promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses. That it can be good again. And only Peeta can give me that.

(Collins, 2010, p. 388)

She relates back to her first memory of Peeta, of how he saved her with loaves of bread, and of how she will always think of the dandelion in spring when she remembers.

....To this day, I can never shake the connection between this boy, Peeta Mellark, and the bread that gave me hope, and the dandelion that reminded me that I was not doomed.

(Collins, 2010, p. 32)

Officially concluding the series is the Epilogue of *Mockingjay*, which takes readers twenty years into the future from the end of the last chapter of the novel, to Katniss watching her children play in the meadow, as she reflects in the events of the past. We learn that she and Peeta have remained in District Twelve, rebuilding their lives, along with Haymitch and the other previous residents who have returned home. While watching her children, a daughter around five-years-old, and a toddler son, Katniss reminisces about her decision to have children.

They play in the Meadow. The dancing girl with the dark hair and blue eyes. The boy with blond curls and gray eyes, struggling to keep up with her on his chubby toddler legs. It took five, ten, fifteen years for me to agree. But Peeta wanted them so badly. When I first felt her stirring inside of me, I was consumed with a terror that felt as old as life itself. Only the joy of holding her in my arms could tame it. Carrying him was a little easier, but not much.

(Collins, 2010, p. 389)

It is this announcement of Katniss's first pregnancy that fanfic writer Writingwife83 has written for the continued imagination of fans.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. Writingwife83 enters The Hunger Games storyworld by expanding the series timeline, in order to add a vignette that takes place in between the last chapter of *Mockingjay* and the Epilogue. This recontextualization provides an opportunity to also shift the genre from the dystopic tale of the original, to that of a story focused on growth and rebirth, one of hope. Changing none of the aspects of the original created by Collins, Writingwife83 brings readers into a moment of happiness that will change Katniss and Peeta's lives for the better.

Setting the story approximately fifteen years after the events of *Mockingjay*, Writingwife83 explores how Katniss feels when she first tells Peeta that he is to be a father.

She paced back and forth behind her house. She wrung her hands and her brow stayed constantly furrowed. She knew what she needed to do, but it was so overwhelming. She'd faced everything that could paralyze you with fear, but somehow this was turning her into a complete wreck. It shouldn't, but it was.

In reality, Katniss knew why it was so hard. It was the fear of loss; the belief that she could never keep anything good and couldn't really be forever happy. She glanced briefly at the primrose bushes, quiet and unadorned now that it was autumn. She both loved and hated Peeta for making sure that they were always kept up and then replanted every couple of years.

(Writingwife83, "In the Spring")

Building on the feelings of Collins's Katniss in the Epilogue, Writingwife83 parallels Katniss's feelings of fear between the two works. While wondering how she will explain what she and Peeta endured, she thinks, "I'll tell them how I survive it. I'll tell them that on bad mornings, it feels impossible to take pleasure in anything because I'm afraid it could be taken away" (Collins, 2010, p. 390). Writingwife83 adds another dimension to

Katniss's thoughts with "It was the fear of loss; the belief that she could never keep anything good and couldn't really be forever happy" ("In the Spring").

Summary Analysis. Building on what Collins's has left for readers to infer, Writingwife83 incorporates many elements from the original, illustrating a legitimacy of the writing that remains faithful to the created world; however, she is able to make the story her own through the shift in point-of-view from first-person to third-person omniscient. While still mainly focused on Katniss's point-of-view, the third-person allows for more insight into Peeta's feelings that are missing from the original. Katniss, when trying to tell Peeta the news, instead alarms him.

Peeta was terrified of course. She looked so serious. He had learned to read her subtleties and knew her better than anyone, so although he could tell she wasn't truly upset...this was something big.

"You're kind of scaring me here," he said with a short laugh as they took the little walk over to their couch in the living room.

(Writingwife83, "In the Spring")

Providing readers with more insight into Peeta's feelings allows for deeper connections with the character. Whereas in The Hunger Games readers must rely on Katniss's observations, this story allows for readers to *see* Peeta's actions and make sense of what is happening for their own understanding.

Foregoing the dystopian elements of the original, this story provides a view into the relationship of Katniss and Peeta, older and more focused on each other, rather than the action that is seemingly nonstop in the original series. It is more grounded in a reality to which some readers may relate, the choice to discontinue birth control in order to create a family.

She felt the damp warmth as he both wept and pressed kisses to her neck. She thought of all the times she'd seen him cry...and there were precious few that were happy occasions. In the moment, despite her

continued worry and anxiety, she wondered why she hadn't done this years ago. He was so happy.

Peeta pulled away and sniffed a little as he shook his head. "I can't believe you didn't tell me. And h-how did this happen?" His happiness was momentarily replaced with confusion.

Katniss smiled sheepishly as it was time for another confession. "I stopped taking them...those pills. I haven't taken any since the end of this past spring. I made this decision, Peeta, just me," she said firmly. "You always told me it was ok that I didn't want children and that it was my decision. Well I decided to change my mind. I wanted to do this...for us."

(Writingwife83, "In the Spring")

While not all readers can relate to making the decision to create a family, the choice itself is more representative of the types of every day concerns and problems readers may face, demonstrating a more obvious change in the genre from the original.

Expanding further on the concept of family, Writingwife83 includes a reference to Haymitch in "In the Spring". Living next door to Katniss and Peeta when he returns to District Twelve, Haymitch spends his time alternating between raising geese and waiting for the next train with shipments of liquor to appear (Collins, 2010, p. 387). While not directly within the story, Katniss makes reference to Haymitch, and of how he is a part of their family.

"And we don't have to invite Haymitch tonight! Why don't you just have whatever you want and I can always bring him leftovers." Peeta had already made his way back toward the kitchen.

Katniss paused for a moment. "No. No, I'll go get him. I want to tell him too...if that's ok with you."

Peeta smiled softly. "Yeah, of course it's ok." He knew what she was thinking, that this man needed the sparks of joy and hope as much as or more so than they did. And the truth was that he was family. He had been for over fifteen years.

(Writingwife83, "In the Spring")

Writingwife83 places Haymitch into the timeline, indicating that he is around to see the birth of at least Katniss and Peeta's first child. In the Epilogue, his fate is not mentioned, leaving readers with an uncertainty of the remainder of his life. Writingwife83 includes

him, indicating that he is still a part of Katniss and Peeta's lives as a father figure to them both.

Connecting this fan fiction response to the original is also the use of *spring* symbolism, the essence of rebirth and growth. In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss recalls the first moment she is aware of Peeta, as he throws two loaves of burnt bread at her, as she is huddled in the rain, hardly able to move to extreme hunger. As she wakes the following day, she begins to wonder if Peeta had burnt the loaves on purpose so that they would be thrown out, questioning what his motive could have been. When they make eye contact later in the day, she drops her eyes, embarrassed at Peeta seeing her in vulnerable state. As she looks down, she sees the first dandelion of the year, the representation of the coming spring. From this moment on, she equates dandelions and spring with Peeta, and the moment he saved her and her family from starvation.

...It didn't occur to me until the next morning that the boy might have burned the bread on purpose. Might have dropped the loaves into the flames, knowing it meant being punished, and then delivered them to me. But I dismissed this. It must have been an accident. Why would he have done it? He didn't even know me. Still, just throwing me the bread was an enormous kindness that would have surely resulted in a beating if discovered. I couldn't explain his actions.

We ate slices of bread for breakfast and headed to school. **It was as if spring had come overnight.** Warm sweet air. Fluffy clouds. At school, I passed the boy in the hall, his cheek had swelled up and his eye had blackened. He was with his friends and didn't acknowledge me in any way. But as I collected Prim and started for home that afternoon, I found him staring at me from across the school yard. Our eyes met for only a second, then he turned his head away. **I dropped my gaze, embarrassed, and that's when I saw it. The first dandelion of the year.** A bell went off in my head. I thought of the hours spent in the woods with my father and I knew how we were going to survive.

(Collins, 2010, p. 32)

Writingwife83 not only references spring with the title, but also within the story. When asked how did this happen, Katniss tells Peeta that "I haven't taken any [birth control

pills] since the end of this past spring”, symbolizing the end of one part of her life, and the beginning of another; of one as a mother. Building even more so on the rebirth motif is Katniss’s response to Peeta concerning when the baby will be due.

She couldn't help but feel warmed inside. Wasn't she getting what she had always known she needed? Just like Peeta...a promise of life and rebirth...the dandelion...

"In the spring," she answered with a smile.

(Writingwife83, “In the Spring”)

This continued reference to rebirth follows the theme of Collins’s ending to the series, by taking readers to the point in Katniss’s life where she may still be unable to let go of the past, but she is now ready to move on to the future.

“In the Wee Small Hours” by ct522: Recontextualization (Full Story Available in Appendix G)

Context of the Original Storyworld. In the end of the first novel in the series, *The Hunger Games*, Peeta comes to the realization that the feelings Katniss showed towards him throughout the games were part of an act, building on the star-crossed lovers, tragic tale that took hold once Peeta had announced his love for her.

....“So, what you’re saying is, these last few days and then I guess...back in the arena...that was just some strategy you two worked out.”

“No. I mean, I couldn’t even talk to him in the arena, could I?” I stammer.

“But you knew what he wanted you to do, didn’t you?” says Peeta. I bite my lip. “Katniss?” He drops my hand and I take a step, as if to catch my balance.

“It was all for the Games,” Peeta says. “How you acted.”

“Not all of it,” I say, tightly holding on to my flowers.

“Then how much? No, forget that. I guess the real question is what’s going to be left when we get home?” he says.

“I don’t know. The closer we get to District Twelve, the more confused I get,” I say. He waits, for further explanation, but none’s forthcoming.

“Well, let me know when you work it out,” he says, and the pain in his voice is palpable.

I know my ears are healed because, even with the rumble of the engine, I can hear every step he takes back to the train. By the time I've climbed aboard, Peeta has disappeared into his room for the night. I don't see him the next morning, either. In fact, the next time he turns up, we're pulling into District 12. He gives me a nod, his face expressionless.

I want to tell him that he's not being fair. That we were strangers. That I did what it took to stay alive, to keep us both alive in the arena. That I can't explain how things are with Gale because I don't know myself. That it's no good loving me because I'm never going to get married anyway and he'd just end up hating me later instead of sooner. That if I do have feelings for him, it doesn't matter because I'll never be able to afford the kind of love that leads to a family, to children. And how can he? How can he after what we've just been through?

I also want to tell him how much I already miss him. But that wouldn't be fair on my part.

(ct522, "In the Wee Small Hours")

As they come closer to home in District Twelve, Katniss begins to wrestle with her feelings, not being able to understand herself what feelings she has for Peeta, or for Gale.

Gale. The idea of seeing Gale in a matter of hours makes my stomach churn. But why? I can't quite frame it in my mind. I only know that I feel like I've been lying to someone who trusts me. Or more accurately, to two people. I've been getting away with it up to this point because of the Games. But there will be no Games to hide behind back home.

(Collins, 2008, p. 371)

It is this struggle between navigating her feelings that Katniss faces throughout the remainder of the series, until the end of *Mockingjay*, when she realizes it is Peeta whom she cannot live without.

Throughout *Catching Fire*, Katniss and Peeta continue to play the role of lovers for the audience, but with one another, when in private, they remain distant, only speaking to one another when necessary. It is not until they are on the train for their Victory Tour that Peeta opens up to Katniss, apologizing for his behavior.

He takes a deep breath. “Look, Katniss, I’ve been wanting to talk to you about the way I acted on the train. I mean, the last train. The one that brought us home. I knew you had something with Gale. I was jealous of him before I even officially met you. And it wasn’t fair to hold you to anything that happened in the Games. I’m sorry.”

His apology takes me by surprise. It’s true that Peeta froze me out after I confessed that my love for him during the Games was something of an act. But I don’t hold that against him. In the arena, I’d played that romance angle for all it was worth. There had been times when I didn’t honestly know how I felt about him. I still don’t, really.

“I’m sorry, too,” I say.

(Collins, 2009, p. 51)

This truce between them remains for the rest of the novel, especially when they are both called on to compete in the Third Quarter Quell Hunger Games.

....The president removes an envelope clearly marked with a 75. He runs his finger under the flap and pulls out a small square of paper. Without hesitation, he reads, “On the seventy-fifth anniversary, as a reminder to the rebels that even the strongest among them cannot overcome the power of the Capitol, the male and female tributes will be reaped from their existing pool of victors.”

My mother gives a faint shriek and Prim buries her face in her hands, but I feel more like the people I see in the crowd on television. Slightly baffled. What does it mean? Existing pool of victors?

Then I get it, what it means. At least, for me. District 12 only has three existing victors to choose from. Two male. One female...

(Collins, 2009, pp. 172-173)

It is shortly after learning that they will be competing again in the games, that fanner ct522 explores the tension between Peeta and Katniss as they run in to each other while out for a walk, escaping momentarily from the nightmares.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. Ct522’s recontextualization of *Catching Fire*, this short vignette, offers a shift in perspective, to that of Peeta, as he walks in the early morning hours to clear his head to escape the nightmares. As he is walking, he runs into Katniss, who is also out, trying to escape her nightmares as well. Ct522 explores the tension that is still present in their relationship, with neither knowing exactly how to act

around the other. Still in love with Katniss, Peeta tries to maintain his *just friends* demeanor.

Peeta battled with the thought that he could warm her up and make the cold go away. It would take nothing more than him reaching his arm out and pulling her close to him. The urge was so powerful, he had to check himself to be sure that he hadn't actually done it. However, when they had gotten back to 12, he had finally learned his lesson. It was something she simply didn't want from him. Instead of begging to let him warm her, which he might have even done if he thought he had a small chance of convincing her, he said simply, "You're cold. Let me walk you back home."

(ct522, "In the Wee Small Hours")

Both Katniss and Peeta wrestle with nightmares throughout the series. Often, their only reprieve is found in the arms of one another, especially when either traveling to the Capitol, or in the Training Center, awaiting the games.

...Effie starts giving me pills to sleep, but they don't work. Not well enough. I drift off only to be roused by nightmares that have increased in number and intensity. Peeta, who spends much of the night roaming the train, hears me screaming as I struggle to break out of the haze of drugs that merely prolong the horrible dreams. He manages to wake me and calm me down. Then he climbs into bed to hold me until I fall back to sleep. After that, I refuse the pills. But every night I let him into my bed. We manage the darkness as we did in the arena, wrapped in each other's arms, guarding against dangers that can descend at any moment.

(Collins, 2009, p. 72)

Ct522 continues this aspect of the novel, illustrating how Katniss and Peeta handle their nightmares when in District Twelve, when not spending their nights together.

This special kind of peace soothed him and though he longed for a restful sleep, the silence of the slumbering District would have to do because what Peeta really wanted, or needed, to sleep well was outside of his reach. He knew if Katniss came to his bed, even for a few hours, he would sleep like a baby and his nightmares would recede to the background, in deference to the comfort that he only found in her arms.

He imagined her firm back pressed against his stomach as he curled himself around her like a warm blanket. It comforted her also - he could feel it in the way her body settled down against him, her small sigh

of relief that she probably didn't realize she was making when their skin made contact through the material of their pajamas. But it was he who could feel all the awful events of his life slide away before the warmth of her small body in his arms. He ached for her to cure his insomnia and something even more acute - the unbearable isolation of being a Victor all alone.

(ct522, "In the Wee Small Hours")

The story continues with Peeta walking Katniss home, both suffering through feelings that are left unsaid between them.

Katniss paused at her threshold, looking over her shoulder at him, and he thought he caught a glimpse of something in her face – longing perhaps? But she dropped her gaze quickly and unlocked the door. Surely, it had been a figment of his desperate imagination. She pressed her way inside and turned fully to part from him.

(ct522, "In the Wee Small Hours")

Summary Analysis. Entering into an established storyworld that includes novels, as well as movies can prove to be a challenge when writing fan fiction because the lines dividing the two can be so easily blurred; however, there are clues within stories that can illustrate which of the worlds the fanner is clearly entering. In the story "In the Wee Small Hours", it is clear as to which world ct522 is entering through the use of one simple word, prosthetic.

In the novel *The Hunger Games*, Katniss saves Peeta's life from blood loss, as well as infection, by placing a tourniquet on his leg. While being interviewed by Caesar Flickerman after winning the games, she learns of the consequences that action had for Peeta.

"New leg?" I say, and I can't help reaching out and pulling up the bottom of Peeta's pants. "Oh, no," I whisper, taking in the metal-and-plastic device that has replaced his flesh.

(Collins, 2008, p. 369)

While not a largely significant event throughout the series, this specific action creates a way for understanding through which storyworld the fanner is entering, the texts or the films. Ct522 clearly references the novels with the line “Peeta was careful with his footing, considering his prosthetic and the stone that protruded from the otherwise smooth carpet of green” (In the Wee Small Hours”).

Most significant to the analysis of this story is the intertextuality utilized by ct522 as she references, and uses as basis for the story, the Frank Sinatra song, “In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning”. The song is about someone losing sleep as he lies awake thinking of the girl he loves, but who does not feel the same for him. The song, written in 1955, clearly describes the feelings Peeta has for Katniss. Although his “lonely heart has learned its lesson”, he would still not hesitate to “be hers if only she would call.” Ct522 effectively uses this song to create a scene that is not present in Collins’s original work, but which could easily have occurred. Seamlessly woven into the story, ct522 adds connections to the song with the lines “The wee hours of the morning gave him a reprieve from the constant strategizing that dominated his mind every moment of the day” and “when they had gotten back to 12, he had finally learned his lesson.”

“In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning”

Performed by Frank Sinatra

Lyrics by Bob Hilliard

In the wee small hours of the morning,
While the whole wide world is fast asleep,
You lie awake and think about the girl
And never, ever think of counting sheep.

When your lonely heart has learned its lesson,
You'd be hers if only she would call,
In the wee small hours of the morning,
That's the time you miss her most of all.

When your lonely heart has learned its lesson,
You'd be hers if only she would call,
In the wee small hours of the morning,
That's the time you miss her most of all.

(Metrolyrics)

While an awareness of the Frank Sinatra song is not necessary to the understanding and appreciation of the story, the use of the allusion sets it apart from other stories by its demonstration of the use of a more sophisticated literary technique. Mature, developed readers are more readily able to identify allusions, as are more skillful and talented writers able to incorporate them into their stories.

“Like a River Runs” by bleachers: Expanding the Series Timeline, Refocalization, Genre Shifting (Full Story Available in Appendix H)

Context of the Original Storyworld. In the fan fiction story, “Like a River Runs” by the writer bleachers, readers are reacquainted with Finnick Odair and Annie Cresta. In the original storyworld, Finnick, after winning the 65th Hunger Games at the age of fourteen, becomes the youngest Victor in the history of the games, as well as “something of a living legend in Panem” due to his “extraordinary beauty...with golden skin and bronze-colored hair and...incredible eyes” (Collins, 2008, p. 288). Once to the age of sixteen, he has been pursued by those infatuated with him in the Capitol. Katniss describes him as having a parade of lovers during his annual visits, “old or young, lovely or plain, rich or very rich, he’ll keep them company and take their extravagant gifts, but he never stays, and once he’s gone he never comes back” (Collins, 2008, p. 289). It isn’t until in *Mockingjay* that the dark truth about Finnick’s popularity comes out during an interview.

“President Snow used to...sell me...my body, that is,” Finnick begins in a flat, removed tone. “I wasn’t the only one. If a victor is

considered desirable, the president gives them as a reward or allows people to buy them for an exorbitant amount of money. If you refuse, he kills someone you love. So you do it....I wasn't the only one, but I was the most popular," he says. "And perhaps the most defenseless, because the people I loved were so defenseless."

(Collins, 2010, pp. 170)

Despite his many perceived romantic relationships throughout the Capitol, readers become aware in *Catching Fire* that his one love is Annie Cresta, a District Four Victor, "the mad girl from his district who's the only person on earth he loves" (Collins, 2010, p. 12). Although undeveloped when compared to others within the texts, Annie helps develop Finnick throughout *Mockingjay*, from a static to more dynamic character. Known throughout the Districts and the Capitol as unstable, Peeta describes Annie as "the one who went mad when her district partner got beheaded. Ran off by herself and hid. But an earthquake broke a dam and most of the arena got flooded. She won because she was the best swimmer" (Collins, 2008, pp. 347-348).

After the rescue mission to free the remaining tributes from the Capitol, Annie and Finnick are reunited.

A lovely if somewhat bedraggled young woman – dark tangled hair, sea green eyes – runs toward us in nothing but a sheet. "Finnick!" And suddenly, it's as if there's no one in the world but these two, crashing through space to reach each other. They collide, enfold, lose their balance, and slam against a wall, where they stay. Clinging into one being. Indivisible.

(Collins, 2010, pp. 175-176)

Once reunited, Finnick and Annie marry in District Thirteen. While this a moment of happiness and celebration in the midst of a war, it unfortunately does not last long. Finnick accompanies Katniss and others to the Capitol, where they plan on capturing President Snow; however, Finnick is attacked and killed by mutts while traveling underground in the sewers, leaving behind his new bride and unborn son.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. “Like a River Runs”, by the fanner bleachers, brings readers into the storyworld created by Collins through expanding the timeline to include an alternate backstory for Finnick Odair, when he is eighteen-years-old, six years younger than when first introduced in *Catching Fire*. Through this refocalization, readers are provided a view into an event that could have occurred between Finnick and a Capitol Gamemaker, while Finnick mentors a new District Tribute, Annie Cresta. While this story could very well have happened in some alternate timeline based within Collins’s original, due to its faithfulness of Finnick’s story, bleachers changes the Victor of the games, resulting in Annie dying. While Annie dying may not have changed the series of events in *The Hunger Games*, it would have affected the characterization of Finnick, especially in *Mockingjay* when he and Katniss arrive in District Thirteen. Hardened against the Capitol, his behavior after the Quarter Quell rescue may have been more aggressive.

Continuing the story with details of what happens after the games, when a mentor eventually returns home to his district, bleachers creates a tale of sadness and angst that results in a delusional state for Finnick. This genre differs from the original in the aspect that the story focuses upon Finnick and his feelings, rather than the problems surrounding the abusive control of the Capitol.

As the story begins, readers find Finnick alone in a bare room in the “underbelly of the training center”, waiting alone for a Gamemaker, Atlas Dunbryll, to return (bleachers, “Like a River Runs”). As he enters, commenting on Finnick’s disheveled state, Finnick responds with “Bite me.” Immediately regretting the retort, Finnick, holds back any further comment, waiting for Dunbryll to continue. In his reply, readers

discover that Finnick has asked for a favor from Dunbryll, and is now waiting to hear the status.

Throughout the exchange, readers learn that Finnick has attempted to arrange a deal with the Gamemaker, which will insure Annie's success in the arena. Trading sexual favors for the arrangement of a flood, so that Annie, a strong swimmer, will survive, Finnick attempts to save his District Tribute, who is also his love. To Finnick's dismay though, Dunbryll is unable to secure the flood, resulting in Annie's death.

"Our deal," Atlas says as he kicks his feet up on the conference table, "was that if I finally got a taste of the Finnick Odair, I'd propose a flood. The team didn't buy it. There's nothing more that I can do."
(bleachers, "Like a River Runs")

As Finnick argues to be released from the room in order to go do what he can for Annie, he learns of just how much the Capitol is aware of his and Annie's relationship; a relationship that if publicized could mean the end of the Capitol's playboy use of Finnick.

"The Head Gamemaker feels that you are too invested in this tribute, Mr. Odair," Atlas says. "And he feels like it'd be best if you remained in this room until the final cannon."

"I'm not too invested; she is my tribute and it is my job to do everything in my power to get her out of that arena alive."

"It's insulting that you think we don't know what's been going on between you two in District 4, Mr. Odair. The Capitol knows everything. Your job is to look pretty and you can do that after the Games are over. Besides, there's nothing else you can do for your tribute."

(bleachers, "Like a River Runs")

Returning to District Four, Finnick returns home to the house he and Annie shared. Surrounded by memories, Finnick finds his heartbreak dulled by drinking the bottle of wine the two had saved for their wedding day. When this does not quell his anger, he pulls their bed out of their – now his – room, and throws it off the bluff behind their home. Falling asleep in a drunken stupor, he awakes the next morning, reaching

over to pull Annie closer. Realizing again, after the few blissful seconds where he had forgotten reality, he pulls himself out of bed, and walks to the edge of the bluff to overlook the sea.

Moving to place without rocks below, Finnick launches himself off the cliff and into the water.

Time stops as he's suspended in midair. There's a gentle wind from the sea caressing his face and it's nice, peaceful, and then the world bottoms out on him. He's in a free fall and he knows he should be screaming. He should be terrified, but he's not. For the first time since he knew Annie wasn't coming back to him, he can breathe.

He's not paying attention to the actual fall, just the exhilarating rush from the adrenaline high. When the waves at the bottom open up to welcome him, he allows them to swallow him whole.

Under the crush of it, he feels totally at home. On instinct, he swims deeper and deeper until something in him tells him to stop. He's there, he's there under the surface of the sea, and the only moves he's making are to keep his body's natural buoyancy from taking hold. Other than that, everything is completely still.

(bleachers, "Like a River Runs")

Whether jumping to simply be in the water, where he is comfortable and at peace, or jumping in order to escape his sadness through suicide, readers are left with their own interpretation. While striving to stay underwater, Finnick imagines he sees Annie, trying to speak to him. Realizing on one hand that she is not real, he follows her anyway as she heads toward the surface. It is her appearance that pulls Finnick from the depths of the water to the eventual surface, where he finds that breathing "feels like being punched in the face. He's not sure how long he was underwater, but the sharp, pulsing pain in his lungs is enough to know it'd been too long. He's choking from lack of oxygen and from the salt water he's inhaling" (bleachers, "Like a River Runs"). Annie's timely appearance in the water saves Finnick from his possible drowning, whether intentional or not.

Summary Analysis. The exchanges between Finnick and Dunbryll are interesting enough when taking into account that Finnick has engaged in some sort of favor trade with a Gamemaker, but what stands out is Dunbryll's direct reply to the "bite me" comment—"Besides," Atlas adds, an afterthought wrapped up in spikes, "I already have" (bleachers, "Like a River Runs"). Readers of the original story are aware that Finnick, once he became of age at 16, was prostituted out to the highest Capitol bidders, providing the illusion that he has a parade of lovers. In *Mockingjay*, he describes what happened to him, and how he learned to adapt, by dealing in secrets.

"...To make themselves feel better, my patrons would make presents of money or jewelry, but I found a much more valuable form of payment."

Secrets, I think. That's what Finnick told me his lovers paid him in, only I thought the whole arrangement was by his choice.

"Secrets," he says, echoing my thoughts. "And this is where you're going to want to stay tuned, President Snow, because so very many of them were about you. But let's begin with some of the others."

Finnick begins to weave a tapestry so rich in detail that you can't doubt its authenticity. Tales of strange sexual appetites, betrayals of the heart, bottomless greed, and bloody power plays. Drunken secrets whispered over damp pillowcases in the dead of night. Finnick was someone bought and sold. A district slave. A handsome one, certainly, but in reality, harmless. Who would he tell? And who would believe him if he did? But some secrets are too delicious not to share. I don't know the people Finnick names — all seem to be prominent Capitol citizens — but I know, from listening to the chatter of my prep team, the attention the most mild slip in judgment can draw. If a bad haircut can lead to hours of gossip, what will charges of incest, back-stabbing, blackmail, and arson produce? Even as the waves of shock and recrimination roll over the Capitol, the people there will be waiting, as I am now, to hear about the president.

(Collins, 2010, pp. 170-171)

While some may first overlook Dunbryll's return comment, it is followed by an exchange between the two that describes the sexual actions to which Collins alludes, but does not describe. To highlight the pertinent elements of the exchange, I have bolded specific sentences.

There are so many thoughts, so many emotions, floating around Finnick's brain that he's grasping at straws trying to focus on one. When he finally settles on one, **he forces himself to sit back down in his chair. If he winces, it only makes Atlas smirk a bit more.** "I'm not sure how you can be done trying, **after what you did, after what I let you do** —" Finnick breaks off and bites down on his tongue. If he's learned anything since he was fourteen, it's when his arguments stop becoming helpful....

"Calm down, Mr. Odair, **it's not as if I've defiled you in any way that someone else hasn't already** —" Atlas' speech falters for a moment, presumably at the look on Finnick's face. "**— unless, of course, that was the first time?** If that's the case, you've got someone in your corner fighting for you hard, Finnick. But this battle is a battle you've lost, and let this be a lesson for you: **the next time you try to use your sexual appeal to get what you want, make sure you're using it on someone who has the direct power to get you what you want.**"

(bleachers, "Like a River Runs")

Implied in the passage is Finnick's physical pain, implied to be from anal intercourse.

While bleachers does not provide details of the act, she does paint a picture of Finnick using sex, any type of sex, in order to secure a favor. With Finnick's cut off comment of "after what you did, after what I let you do—", added to the "bite me" response, Dunbryll's additional comment of "it's not as if I've defiled you in any way that someone else hasn't already...unless, of course, that was the first time" implies that the sexual act between the two, although consensual, was actually a sexual assault on Finnick.

This story illustrates the depth of Finnick's love for Annie. While it differs from the original with Annie's death, bleachers does provide a more detailed look into the harsh reality Finnick faced for the eight years before the rebellion. By providing a backstory that aligns mostly with Collins's world, bleachers is able to add depth to Finnick's characterization, while detailing aspects of his life left out of the original.

“Meeting In The Middle” by cutemara: Refocalization (Full Story Available in Appendix I)

Context of the Original Storyworld. Many know the story of Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark. They are sent to compete in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death until one victor is left. They become known as the star-crossed lovers of their district. They trick the Capitol with a handful of berries. They incite a rebellion to eventually bring down the Capitol. They then try to rebuild their lives with one another. However, what if it wasn't Katniss and Peeta? What if two others were sent into the arena? This is the world that fanner cutemara develops within the story “Meeting in the Middle”.

Developing a story using Katniss's best friend, Gale Hawthorne, along with Madge Undersee, the mayor's daughter, cutemara rewrites the opening Reaping Ceremony and Tribute Parade with shifts in focus and in perspective. Rather than relying only on one person's point-of-view, originally that of Katniss, cutemara divides the story into two sections, told from the perspectives of both Gale and Madge respectively.

The settings of the fan fiction story are the same as in Collins's original, but the main actions of the protagonists are changed. In the original, Primrose Everdeen is chosen as tribute, and her older sister Katniss immediately volunteers as tribute in her place. While Madge is never referenced to have a sibling, she alone is the chosen tribute in cutemara's story. In a similar fashion to Peeta Mellark in the original, Gale Hawthorne is chosen, forcing him to become the tribute who will have to fight against his love, Madge.

When changing the point-of-view to that of Madge during the Tribute Parade, many of Collins's elements remain the same: Cinna is still the stylist, Haymitch and Effie are still the mentor and escort, and the District Twelve Tributes still cause a stir with their fiery entrance into the Capitol.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. "Meeting in the Middle" recreates the opening of *The Hunger Games* Reaping Ceremony in a very similar fashion as Collins, with one major change; rather than Katniss and Peeta becoming the District Twelve Tributes, Madge Undersee and Gale Hawthorne have become the protagonists of the story. Through this refocalization, fanner cutemara is able to explore the feelings between two characters who are in love, and both have the unfortunate luck to be called on to be tributes to compete in the next Hunger Games.

Through Gale's eyes, readers experience the Reaping Ceremony as he and his love, Madge Undersee, are chosen as tributes.

I don't know how long it takes but it feels like too short a time before the escort is telling us to shake hands. But Madge doesn't pause, she walks into my arms and I hold her tight and sink my hands into her beautiful, heavy, gold hair. My forehead is pressed against hers and I hear her murmur softly that she loves me, she loves me, she loves me, she loves me. I don't say it back. I can't. I can't say anything right now, too full of anger at the Capitol. Too full of fear for my family. Too full of fear for her. So I do the only thing I can do and catch her lips with mine. And as I pull away I hear her breath hitch softly as she looks up at me and I can see everything she feels reflected in her eyes.

(cutemara, "Meeting in the Middle")

As they travel to the Capitol, the narrative changes to that of Madge, as she sees Gale at the Tribute Parade. Remaining true to Collins's characterization of Gale, cutemara describes him through Madge's eyes as calculating as he takes in the other tributes.

He's always been striking but I've never seen him so clean or clean-shaven. He's wearing the same skintight black that I am wearing

with larger embellishments on the shoulders. He looks so tall and strong and proud and I think to myself he's mine, he's mine, how is he mine?!

But he doesn't look at me. He stands next to me and his beautiful grey eyes are cold and hard like steel as they watch the chariot, the horses, the other tributes, their stylists. And once again I feel so alone. I place my hand on his arms that are crossed in front of him. He spares me a quick glance before his eyes return to the other tributes, weighing, measuring, judging them.

(cutemara, "Meeting in the Middle")

Summary Analysis. The inclusion of Madge as a companion for Gale serves two purposes – as an alternate love interest differing from the Gale-Katniss-Peeta triangle, and as someone who is willing to fight against the Capitol along with Gale.

As a minor character, Madge makes an appearance only in the novels, and not the films. Collins creates her as a friend to Katniss, and uses her to develop Gale's anger at the system of fear and control held over the districts by the Capitol, early in the first novel. While delivering strawberries to sell to the mayor's household, readers in the original storyworld are first introduced to Madge.

The mayor's daughter, Madge, opens the door. She's in my year at school. Being the mayor's daughter, you'd expect her to be a snob, but she's all right. She just keeps to herself. Like me. Since neither of us really has a group of friends, we seem to end up together a lot at school. Eating lunch, sitting next to each other at assemblies, partnering for sports activities. We rarely talk, which suits us both just fine.

Today her drab school outfit has been replaced by an expensive white dress, and her blonde hair is done up with a pink ribbon. Reaping clothes.

"Pretty dress," says Gale.

Madge shoots him a look, trying to see if it's a genuine compliment or if he's just being ironic. It is a pretty dress, but she would never be wearing it ordinarily. She presses her lips together and then smiles. "Well, if I end up going to the Capitol, I want to look nice, don't I?"

Now it's Gale's turn to be confused. Does she mean it? Or is she messing with him? I'm guessing the second.

"You won't be going to the Capitol," says Gale coolly. His eyes land on a small, circular pin that adorns her dress. Real gold. Beautifully

crafted. It could keep a family in bread for months. “What can you have? Five entries? I had six when I was just twelve years old.”

“That’s not her fault,” I say.

“No, it’s no one’s fault. Just the way it is,” says Gale.

Madge’s face has become closed off. She puts the money for the berries in my hand. “Good luck, Katniss.”

(Collins, 2008, p. 12)

Cutemara further develops this initial relationship between Gale and Madge, through a first-person point-of-view memory from Gale, which allows readers insight into his feelings.

I remember a time when I would have mistaken the disdain in her eyes as disdain for me. I remember when I hated her for what she had and what she ate and what she wore. I remember my shock at accidentally hearing her muttering in anger against the capitol after the last reaping. I remember challenging her about it. I remember meeting her in the meadow all through summer when we were both supposed to be asleep in our beds at night. I remember hatred and anger turning to confusion and then admiration. I remember one evening, looking into her eyes and realizing I loved her.

(cutemara, “Meeting in the Middle”)

The use of the first-person narrative in “Meeting in the Middle” mimics Collins’s own use of it throughout the series with Katniss. Refocalizing the narrative through Gale and Madge’s perspectives allows for a deeper insight into the character motivations, as cutemara explores the relationship between two characters who are actually in love with one another when sent to the Capitol.

While there are fanners who choose to *ship* – create a relationship pairing often not found in the original – characters who are somewhat out of the norm, cutemara pairs Madge and Gale, which is not too far of a stretch. After Gale is whipped in the Town Square for illegal hunting, Madge brings much needed pain medication.

“Use these for your friend,” she says. I take off the lid of the box, revealing half a dozen vials of clear liquid. “They’re my mother’s. She

said I could take them. Use them, please.” She runs back into the storm before we can stop her.

“Crazy girl,” Haymitch mutters as we follow my mother into the kitchen.

Whatever my mother had given Gale, I was right, it isn’t enough. His teeth are gritted and his flesh shines with sweat. My mother fills a syringe with the clear liquid from one of the vials and shoots it into his arm. Almost immediately, his face begins to relax.

“What is that stuff?” asks Peeta.

“It’s from the Capitol. It’s called morphling,” my mother answers.

“I didn’t even know Madge knew Gale,” says Peeta.

“We used to sell her strawberries,” I say almost angrily. What am I angry about, though? Not that she has brought the medicine, surely.

“She must have quite a taste for them,” says Haymitch.

That’s what nettles me. It’s the implication that there’s something going on between Gale and Madge. And I don’t like it.

“She’s my friend” is all I say.

(Collins, 2009, pp. 115-116)

While Katniss thinks nothing of it at first, both Haymitch and Peeta question Madge’s actions, leading to Katniss wondering about her feelings for Gale.

Another reason for the inclusion of Madge in “Meeting in the Middle” is to develop the anger towards the Capitol along with Gale. Madge is one of the only other characters in the series that may know more about possible resistance and rebellions. As District Twelve’s mayor’s daughter, Madge may be more privy to the unrest that may be happening in the districts. The gift of the mockingjay pin illustrates this possibility.

“Sharing in Thirteen” by Ellana-san: Recontextualization, Refocalization, Genre Shifting (Full Story Available in Appendix J)

Context of the Original Storyworld. District Thirteen, long thought of as destroyed by the Capitol has actually survived for the past 75 years since the District Uprising that led to the creation of the Hunger Games. Through an agreement with the Capitol, the district agrees not to fire their nuclear weapons at the Capitol, if the Capitol will leave them in peace. Using the same reoccurring propaganda footage of a destroyed

district, many people in the districts begin to question whether or not it really had been destroyed. Hoping for the best, many rebels flee towards the supposedly destroyed district, seeking shelter.

In *Mockingjay*, Katniss describes life in District Thirteen, from the temporary tattooed schedules printed on people's arms, to the strict structure of life demanded from those in charge.

...In the seventy-five years since the Dark Days – when 13 was said to have been obliterated in the war between the Capitol and the districts – almost all new construction has been beneath the earth's surface. There was already a substantial underground facility here, developed over centuries to be either a clandestine refuge for government leaders in time of war or a last resort for humanity if life above became unlivable. Most important for the people of 13, it was the center of the Capitol's nuclear weapons development program. During the Dark Days, the rebels in 13 wrested control from the government forces, trained their nuclear missiles on the Capitol, and then struck a bargain: They would play dead in exchange for being left alone. The Capitol had another nuclear arsenal out west, but it couldn't attack 13 without certain retaliation. It was forced to accept 13's deal. The Capitol demolished the visible remains of the district and cut off all access from the outside. Perhaps the Capitol's leaders thought that, without help, 13 would die off on its own. It almost did a few times, but it always managed to pull through due to strict sharing of resources, strenuous discipline, and constant vigilance against any further attacks from the Capitol.

Now the citizens live almost exclusively underground. You can go outside for exercise and sunlight but only at very specific times in your schedule. You can't miss your schedule. Every morning, you're supposed to stick your right arm in this contraption in the wall. It tattoos the smooth inside of your forearm with your schedule for the day in a sickly purple ink. 7: 00 – *Breakfast*. 7: 30 – *Kitchen Duties*. 8: 30 – *Education Center, Room 17*. And so on. The ink is indelible until 22: 00 – *Bathing*. That's when whatever keeps it water resistant breaks down and the whole schedule rinses away. The lights-out at 22:30 signals that everyone not on the night shift should be in bed.

(Collins, 2010, p.17-18)

Katniss, resentful that District Thirteen has sat by and let the other districts suffer, has issues following orders and abiding by a schedule. With Katniss's description of the

district, a reader better understands the situation that occurs in “Sharing in Thirteen” when the relationships of two couples become the focus.

They're so frugal with things here, waste is practically a criminal activity. Fortunately, the people of 12 have never been wasteful. But once I saw Fulvia Cardew crumple up a sheet of paper with just a couple of words written on it and you would've thought she'd murdered someone from the looks she got. Her face turned tomato red, making the silver flowers inlaid in her plump cheeks even more noticeable. The very portrait of excess. One of my few pleasures in 13 is watching the handful of pampered Capitol “rebels” squirming as they try to fit in.

(Collins, 2010, p. 18)

Entrance into Fan Fiction. While The Hunger Games cannot be identified as humorous, a reader can imagine that even amidst a rebellion, there will be moments of laughter. Continuing to build the Effie and Haymitch relationship, Ellana-san creates another fan fiction story “Sharing in Thirteen”. Whereas “Fate is a Fickle Thing” was set in an alternate universe through character dislocation, Ellana-san chooses in this story to enter the storyworld through the alternate universe technique of genre shifting. The Hunger Games series is characterized as being in science fiction and dystopia genre; a romantic comedy it is not. Taking life in District Thirteen, and creating problems that may arise with adults trying to hide their relationships from one another, “Sharing in Thirteen” describes a more realist illustration, albeit humorous, of the issues that occur when people live in close quarters.

The recontextualization entrance into the story allows for Ellana-san to create a vignette of a possible missing scene within the story, which offers an extended view of what life could be like when people are brought together to share a close space. The refocalization allows for a shift in point of view, as readers are able to see another side of life in District Thirteen, outside of Katniss.

Joining Effie and Haymitch in the story are Plutarch Heavensbee and Fulvia Cardew, two Capitol rebels who helped to orchestrate the tributes' escape during the Quarter Quell. Plutarch, the leader of the rebellion, is introduced in *Catching Fire* as the Head Gamemaker. As a spy for the rebellion, he plans and executes the rebels' arrival in District Thirteen. Once there, he begins work on the propaganda campaign featuring Katniss as the Mockingjay, as well as planning the upcoming attack on the Capitol. Fulvia Cardew, his assistant, both while in the Capitol, as well as in District Thirteen, helps to create these proposals with him. Originally, it is her idea to film Katniss on a stage with a script for her to read; however, this does not work well at all. Katniss, never one who is able to pretend to be someone she is not, struggles with the concept of acting. Creating a tension between him and Fulvia, Haymitch suggests the better plan of filming Katniss while in action, while being herself.

This fan fiction story takes place in the original storyworld through a blending of the *Mockingjay* texts and films. In the original text, Effie's whereabouts are unknown until the end of the novel when she is rescued when the Capitol falls to the rebels. The movie, however, has Effie joining Katniss early in District Thirteen, helping her to become the Mockingjay. With the character of Effie in the films, the role of Fulvia becomes moot, resulting in her being cut from the script. With each having a role in either the text or the film, but not both, Ellana-san weaves together the worlds, giving each character a place within this story.

Similar to Effie and Haymitch, a relationship between Plutarch and Fulvia is not implied in the novel, but fans have found a place for *Heavensdew* within their fan

fiction responses. As the story begins, Plutarch and Fulvia are lying in bed lamenting their lack of time together.

"I hate this." Plutarch sighed, making no move to get out of bed. Fulvia set about gathering her clothes, regularly checking the fluorescent numbers indicating time on the wall – time was important in Thirteen, certainly never to be wasted, and everything had to be strictly kept on schedule even, as unappealing as it sounded, secret sex meetings.

(Ellana-san, "Sharing in Thirteen")

When Fulvia finds a white bra in Plutarch's room, her suspicions grow, even though Plutarch vehemently denies knowing where the bra came from. When she asks if Haymitch has a girlfriend, Plutarch replies with "aside from his right hand?", following it with the reason that it must have been a mistake with the laundry. Determined to find out whose it is, or if it was just a mix-up with the laundry, Fulvia takes the bra with her.

As the day progresses, Fulvia still suspicious of Plutarch, gives him the cold shoulder, until she eventually forgets about it, becoming focused on the propos with Katniss, as well as with the rebel plans against the Capitol. Getting ready the next morning, she remembers the bra and her plan to find out where it came from. As she looks around, not finding it, she asks her roommate, Effie, if she had seen it. Effie replies that she "thought it was one of mine" (Ellana-san, "Sharing in Thirteen"). Looking in Effie's dresser drawer, Fulvia finds a variety of white bras, ranging from plain to those that "Thirteen would never officially approve of". Realizing that no one else in Thirteen would have a collection like this, Fulvia comes to the conclusion that Effie must be having an affair with Plutarch. Indignant at the idea, Effie replies disdainfully that "he is very much not my type" (Ellana-san, "Sharing in Thirteen"). Believing her, Fulvia then asks if she is sleeping with Haymitch. Deflecting the question, Effie asks if she is interested in Haymitch. Answering no, Fulvia realizes that she needs to apologize to

Plutarch for her accusation and behavior the previous day, since the situation indeed does seem to have been caused by a laundry mistake.

Summary Analysis. Although “Sharing in Thirteen” offers no additional dystopian characteristics, it does relate back to those found in Collins’s original texts: the excessive measures to police society, this time in reference to District Thirteen, and media manipulation, seen in the propos being created by Fulvia and Plutarch with the Mockingjay.

Ellana-san writes two stories, “Fate is a Fickle Thing” and “Sharing in Thirteen”, each of which are focused on a relationship not developed in the original storyworld. While many fanners choose to continue the story related to Katniss and Peeta, or on the main characters of an original storyworld in general, Ellana-san creates new stories and situations, revolving around characters who are not as fully developed in the original, specifically Plutarch and Fulvia. While the main entrance into the storyworld in both of the preceding fan fiction pieces is through an alternate universe, character dislocation and genre shifting respectively, Ellana-san also uses the technique of refocalization with the focus being on supporting characters found within the original.

Whereas “Fate is a Fickle Thing” includes elements of eroticization not present in the original storyworlds – texts and movies – “Sharing in Thirteen” does not. However, even without the eroticization, this story does focus on the actions of the adults with the adult themes of relationships and sex. This contrasts with the original texts, with the focus on Katniss and her evolving worldview from innocence to the harsh reality of war. The focus being on the adults in the story illustrates that Ella-san recognizes the realistic adult desires and actions regarding relationships. Even though the adults lives are not

referenced by Collins, Ellana-san demonstrates in her stories the reality of situations and what would most likely happen between consenting adults, who are either sexually attracted to one another, or find themselves in close quarters with one another during a time of high stress and tension.

“Sparkling Frost” by Miss Ami-chan: Recontextualization, Refocalization (Full Story Available in Appendix K)

Context of the Original Storyworld. In a very similar fashion to that of ct522’s fan fiction story, “In the Wee Small Hours”, fanner Miss Ami-chan creates a vignette that explores the frostiness between Katniss and Peeta after they have returned to District Twelve as Victors, but before they have left to visit all the other Districts on their Victory Tour. Miss Ami-chan further develops a backstory concerning Peeta’s family as well, specifically the tension and underlying anger that surrounds Peeta’s relationship with his mother since his return home.

In Collins’s original storyworld, Katniss and Peeta return home to District Twelve, both as Victors of the 74th Annual Hunger Games. As previously described in “In the Wee Small Hours”, Peeta soon realizes that the love Katniss showed for him during the games was all an act, in order to gain sponsors and trick the Capitol into letting them both win the games. He also begins to understand Haymitch’s role in the charade, when he discovers that he has been coaching Katniss regarding how to act, but not Peeta.

Haymitch startles me when he lays a hand on my back. Even now, in the middle of nowhere, he keeps his voice down. “Great job, you two. Just keep it up in the district until the cameras are gone. We should be okay.” I watch him head back to the train, avoiding Peeta’s eyes.

“What’s he mean?” Peeta asks me.

“It’s the Capitol. They didn’t like our stunt with the berries,” I blurt out.

“What? What are you talking about?” he says.

“It seemed too rebellious. So, Haymitch has been coaching me through the last few days. So I didn’t make it worse,” I say.

“Coaching you? But not me,” says Peeta.

“He knew you were smart enough to get it right,” I say.

(Collins, 2008, pp. 371-372)

Catching Fire begins the day of the cameras arriving to film the preparations of Katniss and Peeta leaving for the Victory Tour. From the end of *The Hunger Games* to the beginning of *Catching Fire*, approximately six months have passed, in which Katniss and Peeta have gone about their lives in District Twelve, separately. This separation however, has not dulled the feelings that Katniss continues to struggle with concerning Peeta.

Just the sound of his voice twists my stomach into a knot of unpleasant emotions like guilt, sadness, and fear. And longing. I might as well admit there’s some of that, too. Only it has too much competition to ever win out.

(Collins, 2009, p. 14)

Haymitch even notes the frostiness between them as they both arrive at his house to help prepare him for the Capitol’s visit.

“Brrr. You two have got a lot of warming up to do before showtime.”

He’s right, of course. The audience will be expecting the pair of lovebirds who won the Hunger Games. Not two people who can barely look each other in the eye.

(Collins, 2009, pp. 15-16)

Miss Ami-chan, in “Sparking Frost”, explores this time set in-between the first two novels, as she adds layers to the original story, told through Peeta’s perspective of events that have occurred during this time.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. The refocalization on Peeta, allows readers more insight into his characterization, as well as a look into the events that may have occurred once home in District Twelve. This six months gap of time between the events in

Collins's first two novels allows Miss Ami-chan an opportunity to explore the relationships and motivations of characters, without changing any of the future events in the original storyworld.

Created in four parts, "Sparking Frost" details the events of Peeta's day as he interacts with Haymitch, his parents, Gale, and Katniss. Through a first-person point-of-view, readers are given insight into Peeta's thoughts and feelings, specifically his feelings of sadness and loneliness as he goes from place to place, and slowly realizes that although he has survived the games, his life is no better for it.

Peeta begins the story by bringing food to share with Haymitch. While there, Haymitch begins a conversation about Katniss, but Peeta stops him, asking if they can talk about something else. To his disappointment, Haymitch asks about Peeta's family.

"I don't know if I'm holding out for anything. Nothing is up to me, but I can't just turn things off. I wish I could. Let's...just talk about something else."

"Fair enough," Haymitch raises his glass, as he pulls his piece of pie towards him, "Have you seen your family recently?"

I close my eyes, really, Haymitch?

"I made the pie at home if that's what you mean."

"Kid, they're the only family you've got."

(Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost")

Miss Ami-chan does not give readers any reasoning as to what the problem is concerning Peeta's family; instead, she details Peeta's visit to the bakery early the next morning.

Setting out with items to trade, Peeta heads to the bakery. Implied is the idea that Peeta has planned this visit specifically at this time in order to see his father, and to avoid his mother.

As always I can smell the bakery before I get there. It should be my father that's working this morning if I'm tracking the schedule correctly but I'm

not sure which of my brother's will be on with him. I work my way around to the back door and knock carefully. I hear some talk about it being a little early for hunter's trading, and then my father opens the door and blinks a little, slightly confused and then manages a smile, "Peeta," he says, softly, and wipes his hands on his apron and moves forward instead of backward, which leads to an awkward stumbling situation and him catching me by the arms so I don't slip over, and then us both on the ground and not on the steps, but everyone is upright and nothing is spilled.

(Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost")

He soon realizes though that this visit will not go the way he had hoped, when he discovers that his mother is there as well.

He grabs my arm and holds it tightly. I wonder for half a moment if I got more strength from him or her, "You must have come all the way down here for a reason."

"Yes, and I realize now that it was a stupid one."

"Peeta-" he says, with dismay, "Don't be like that."

"How am I supposed to feel when you sneak me outside to have even half a conversation because—are you afraid of her? or ashamed of me?"

He pulls me to him then, "I've never been ashamed of you," he whispers, "Never."

I feel the hot tears welling up inside me and try to bite them back, "Could have fooled me," I pull away. Don't fall down. Don't fall down. Thank you.

"Where are you?!" The door opens and there she is. Pinched and angry.

He turns, hands up in placating gestures, automatically.

I don't know which of us she's more shocked to be looking at standing out here in the frost. My father skin reddening in the chill or me in my thick coat, bag slung over my shoulder with what I imagine are red eyes and red nose looking suspicious and guilty.

"Why are you here?"

"Now, dear," my father starts but is cut off by the glare.

"Don't worry," I shake the bag, "I came to buy. I'll be gone quickly."

"We're not open yet," she snaps.

"I thought you'd want me in and out before anyone could see," I wheedle, "Why do you think I came to this door?" My father looks at his feet.

(Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost")

While not explaining the discomfort and tension between them, Miss Ami-chan continues to illustrate the problems within the family through their continued interactions.

Peeta's father, seemingly caught between the two, tries to placate both his wife and his son, by continuing the conversation and trading with Peeta. Moving inside, away from his mother, Peeta enters the place he once called home, and tells his father who tries to make small talk, that he doesn't want him to get "in trouble for fraternizing with the dead" (Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost"). After a mild fight with his mother concerning Katniss, Peeta leaves the shop, making his way to the next stop of The Hob.

Peeta, being the son of the baker, is not accustomed to the Hob, "the black market that operates in an abandoned warehouse that once held coal" (Collins, 2008, p. 11).

While it originally is the place where Katniss trades her hunting kills for items needed at home, it is now become the place where she and Peeta both visit in order to share some of their wealth as Victors with others through trading and buying items that they can then gift to others in need. While passing out fresh bread, he is confronted by Gale, who asks him, "What are you doing slumming down here? Didn't think this was your scene" (Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost").

While Katniss and Gale were friends from before the games, Peeta and Gale were not. Both of their relationships with Katniss cause tension between them – Peeta is in love with her, readers later discover that Gale is also, and Katniss herself is unclear as to how she feels for either of them. Interactions between Peeta and Gale in Collins's original storyworld are few and far between, and Miss Ami-chan follows this with Peeta's run in with Gale being just as brief.

After leaving the Hob, Peeta stops by the Everdeens' house to drop off his remaining loaf of bread, before returning to his own. Once home, he continues the painting he began of Katniss the night before. "Her face, in profile, braid curling over her shoulder. I surround her with a necklace of her namesake flowers and then other local blooms fill the remainder of the picture" (Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost"). Becoming lost in his painting, he is startled to realize that she is standing behind him, and Katniss simply coming over to thank him for the bread, pushes Peeta over the edge as his frustrations finally explode.

"Why do you think you owe me anything?" I demand. It comes out harsher than I meant but all this stumbling and fumbling has finally broken me. We've been on glass and eggshells for months. Is this why Gale is angry all the time?

"Peeta-"

"No, Katniss –" I move away from her, and wind up in the living room, "I wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for you – there is nothing you need to thank me for. I can't –" She gets me all in knots. My words gum up, 'for once' Mom would say. She's echoing all through me right now and I can't stand it. I shouldn't have gone over there, "I can't keep doing this. We're going to be on a train together in two weeks. In six months we're going to be mentoring tributes-"

(Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost")

His yelling results in Haymitch bursting in demanding, "Are you serious right now?"

Continuing with telling Peeta that he expects it from Katniss, but not him, Haymitch asks what is going on. Telling him that it is none of his business, Haymitch corrects him.

"Look, you two are always my business and for the rest of my life you will be my business whether I want it or not, and having a screaming match that they can probably hear down in the bottom of the lowest mine shaft is definitely my business. The Capitol cameras will be here in two weeks you need to get it together! They're expecting love birds so you need to stop this nonsense," he points to Katniss.

(Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost")

Frustrated, angry, and confused, Peeta storms out of his house, leaving Katniss and Haymitch behind.

Summary Analysis. One of the most interesting aspects of this story in the exploration into Peeta's relationship with his family, specifically his mother and father. In the original storyworld, none of his family escapes the bombing of District Twelve by the Capitol, and Peeta's feelings of this loss are unexplored. The only insights readers are given concerning his relationship with his parents are Katniss's memory of the bread Peeta gave her when younger, and his comment to Katniss concerning what his mother told him before they both left for the Capitol.

Katniss's memory with the bread is her first memory of Peeta, and it is the one that reminds her of all that she owes him, a memory that originally drives her desire to pay him back by helping him. While a driving force initially behind her motivations, the memory also illustrates Peeta's early feelings for her, as well as provides readers with a view of his own home life.

I lifted the lid to the baker's trash bin and found it spotlessly, heartlessly bare.

Suddenly a voice was screaming at me and I looked up to see the baker's wife, telling me to move on and did I want her to call the Peacekeepers and how sick she was of having those brats from the Seam pawing through her trash. The words were ugly and I had no defense....

There was a clatter in the bakery and I heard the woman screaming again and the sound of a blow, and I vaguely wondered what was going on. Feet slogged toward me through the mud and I thought, *It's her. She's coming to drive me away with a stick.* But it wasn't her. It was the boy. In his arms, he carried two large loaves of bread that must have fallen into the fire because the crusts were scorched black.

His mother was yelling, "Feed it to the pig, you stupid creature! Why not? No one decent will buy burned bread!"

(Collins, 2008, pp. 29-30)

The blow that Katniss hears is Peeta's mother's slap she gives him, which results in a swollen cheek and black eye (Collins, 2008, p. 32), illustrating at least one instance of abuse Peeta suffered.

Further illustrating Peeta's relationship with his mother is his comment to Katniss regarding what his mother had told him as she visited him to say good-bye before leaving for the Capitol.

"...You know what my mother said to me when she came to say good-bye, as if to cheer me up, she says maybe District Twelve will finally have a winner. Then I realized, she didn't mean me, she meant you!" bursts out Peeta.

"Oh, she meant you," I say with a wave of dismissal.

"She said, 'She's a survivor, that one.' She is," says Peeta.

That pulls me up short. Did his mother really say that about me? Did she rate me over her son? I see the pain in Peeta's eyes and know he isn't lying.

Suddenly I'm behind the bakery and I can feel the chill of the rain running down my back, the hollowness in my belly. I sound eleven years old when I speak. "But only because someone helped me."

(Collins, 2008, p. 90)

While neither of these excerpts provides an abundant understanding of Peeta's relationship with his family, they do provide the opportunity for Miss Ami-chan to explore their interactions once home through the depiction of one visit that seems to have repercussions throughout the rest of Peeta's day.

Showing Peeta's visit, without *telling* the specific reasons behind the tensions, allows readers to infer for their own what is the underlying cause of the anger between Peeta and his mother. After allowing Peeta in to trade goods, his mother cuts in to the conversation, making an assumption that Peeta is trading for something for Katniss. Peeta asks what her problem with Katniss is but fails to receive an answer other than that she will not make something for her.

"It's something for her, isn't it?" her voice cuts in, "We're not making anything for her."

"I wouldn't have expected you to," I answer, "What is your problem with Katniss, exactly?"

"Peeta-" my father warns, but I am so done.

I know Katniss would only trade squirrels with him. I remember **Her** grumbling about things but a lot of the time I would tune her out because she would go on about so many things and as long as they weren't likely to end with the rolling pin or something else along that kind it was just easier.

"Why would I want to make something for that rude and obnoxious girl?" she asks.

(Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost")

Embedded in Peeta's thoughts is something that seems to answer his question, but he is unable to recall. Noting that Katniss only ever dealt with his father when making trades, the implication is there that something occurred with his mother. Miss Ami-chan's use of the capitalized Her indicates that Peeta is referencing his mother, but does not want to refer to her as that. His thoughts also refer back to the abuse that Collins first mentions in the original. Peeta's tuning out of his mother when she was complaining, "as long as they weren't likely to end with the rolling pin or something else along that kind" shows readers that being hit was not outside of the norm in the Mellark household.

Still trying to understand his mother's issue with Katniss, Peeta tries to point out how it is because of Katniss that District Twelve has victors, and how their return to the district resulted in a celebration that brought the Mellarks money.

"Oh, I don't know, perhaps because she's the reason District 12 has victors. You did say that to me when we left, didn't you? You were quite happy about her going then because you thought she might win. The whole District gets more to eat now because of her. You should be kind to your victors. I bet you were happy enough to make things for the return banquet."

"That was work."

(Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost")

Still unclear as to her issue, Peeta accuses her that it is because Katniss brought Peeta back alive that angers her, implying that it would have been better if he had died in the arena.

"Right. Of course, she brought me back with her. You weren't counting on that. Would bleeding to death on top of the Cornucopia have been an embarrassing death or not, out of curiosity? Would it have met with your approval? I would like to know before I leave with two, actually better make that three, of the berry pastries, and a dozen of the small loaves of bread," I tell my father, "I have people to visit," she can't technically get angry with me for giving the bread away any more given I'm actually paying for it but I know it must irritate her all the same so I make sure she knows. In this case I am that petty. I remember the beatings though and the extra names in the pot.

(Miss Ami-chan, "Sparking Frost")

Also present in the preceding excerpt is yet another possible insight into Peeta's backstory and relationship with his mother.

The last line is most interesting, "I remember the beatings though and the extra names in the pot." With a clear reference to the beatings he suffered, Peeta does not feel remorse for his petty comment about giving away the bread; however, the "extra names in the pot" can be inferred to have different meanings. By giving to those less fortunate, Peeta is recalling that many of the families have children who have signed up for a tessera, "a meager year's supply of grain and oil for one person" (Collins, 2008, p. 13). By signing up for a tessera, the child's name is cumulatively entered in the reaping each additional year, and because a child can sign up for each member of their family, some children's names are "in the pot" for the Reaping multiple times each year, similar to Katniss's name being entered twenty times and Gale's forty-two times at the beginning of the 74th Annual Hunger Games. Peeta, recalling this, may be making a general connection to the families of the district; however, it can also be inferred that he is

making a more personal connection, related to his anger at his name being entered into the pot multiple times.

As the baker's son, it is implied throughout the series that Peeta never had to suffer through hardships similar to those of Katniss; that his family always had enough money to get by. With this implication is the belief then that Peeta would not have to sign up for a tessera, which would result in a lower probability that he would be chosen; however, what if he did sign up? What if in order to maintain the bakery, he was forced to request a tessera? The "extra names in the pot" could very well be a reference to the times he had to have his name entered into the Reaping more than it was needed. His memories then of the beatings as well as of the extra names in the pot, describe a darker backstory to Peeta than originally imagined.

"Sparkling Frost" provides a new perspective of Peeta Mellark that allows for a reader to draw her own conclusions concerning his past relationship with his parents. Without specifically provided concrete details, Miss Ami-chan writes a story that further develops Peeta, while offering multiple opportunities for readers to determine their own beliefs concerning the cause of the problem. Building on the few details provided by Collins, this vignette offers a realistic fan fiction story that very well could have occurred in the original storyworld.

"Stuck in a Moment" by sponsormusings: Refocalization, Expanding the Series Timeline, Genre Shifting (Full Story Available in Appendix L)

Context of the Original Storyworld. Katniss Everdeen, heroine of The Hunger Games, finds her breaking point at the end of the novel *Mockingjay*. On a journey that began with saving her sister Prim, she finally comes home to District Twelve, only after

she has suffered a loss that causes her to retreat into herself. While on the mission to capture and kill President Snow, to end the war that is raging, Katniss loses the one person she loves more than anyone, Prim.

As Katniss navigates through the pain of her loss, she soon comes to the realization that it may not have been the Capitol's bombs that killed her sister, but rather the rebels' weapon, specifically that of her friend Gale and fellow victor Beetee. Unable to deal with this loss and new understanding, Katniss retreats into herself, becoming what her doctor describes as a "metal, rather than physical Avox", whose emotional trauma has brought on her silence (Collins, 2010, pp. 358-359).

Keeping her promised word to the Mockingjay, President Coin, the previous leader of District Thirteen and now the newly elected leader of Panem, stages the execution of former President Snow, where Katniss will shoot him through the head with the symbolic last shot of the war from her bow. Understanding now that she has simply replaced one despot with another, Katniss takes aim and assassinates President Coin on live television. To end her pain, Katniss attempts to kill herself with the poison capsule of nightlock hidden in her suit, but Peeta stops her.

Taken into custody, Katniss is left alone, locked away with no interaction with anyone. Intent on killing herself, she refuses to eat or drink, deciding to simply give up on life.

What I can do is give up. I resolve to lie on the bed without eating, drinking, or taking my medications. I could do it, too. Just die.
(Collins, 2010, pp. 375-376)

A few days later, Haymitch arrives with the announcement that he is taking her home, back to District Twelve. Her trial is over, and having been found to be “a hopeless, shell-shocked lunatic”, she is exonerated and allowed to leave (Collins, 2010, p. 378).

Once home in Twelve though, Katniss still struggles with her losses; not only is Prim gone, but also her mother has left, deciding to help in District Four to build a hospital. With only Haymitch and Greasy Sae, a District Twelve survivor, Katniss navigates her way through trying to rebuild some semblance of a life, although not very successfully. It is not until Peeta returns home that Katniss begins to open herself back up into the world of the living, deciding to create a book of memories that will be there to remind her, as well as others, of what has been lost, and what should be celebrated.

I got the idea from our family’s plant book. The place where we recorded those things you cannot trust to memory. The page begins with the person’s picture. A photo if we can find it. If not, a sketch or painting by Peeta. Then, in my most careful handwriting, come all the details it would be a crime to forget. Lady licking Prim’s cheek. My father’s laugh. Peeta’s father with the cookies. The color of Finnick’s eyes. What Cinna could do with a length of silk. Boggs reprogramming the Holo. Rue poised on her toes, arms slightly extended, like a bird about to take flight. On and on. We seal the pages with salt water and promises to live well to make their deaths count. Haymitch finally joins us, contributing twenty-three years of tributes he was forced to mentor. Additions become smaller. An old memory that surfaces. A late primrose preserved between the pages. Strange bits of happiness, like the photo of Finnick and Annie’s newborn son.

(Collins, 2010, p. 387)

Entrance into Fan Fiction. Fanner sponsormusings, once again creates a fan fiction story focused more on Peeta and his thoughts and feelings. Similar to her previous story of “Hide and Seek”, sponsormusings enters the storyworld through refocalization and expanding the series timeline in the story “Stuck in a Moment”. Set in District Twelve, the story occurs during the early rebuilding phases of the district. How much

time has actually passed since the end of the war is unclear, but it is set far enough after the events of *Mockingjay* for people to have returned home, to continue their lives, and to have children. Delly Cartwright, a school companion of Katniss and Peeta, is referenced as having children so the implication is that it has at least been a few years since Katniss returned home.

While the epilogue of *Mockingjay* is the official end of the series timeline, this story represents an expansion. From the end of the war to the time of the epilogue, almost twenty years have occurred. Although it does provide more details to the relationship between Katniss and Peeta, it is more of just a reflection of Katniss's thoughts as she watches her children play. The actual timeline of events ends before, in the last chapter of the novel.

As the story opens, Katniss and Peeta are home, watching the snowfall. Katniss, content with only having Peeta by her side, is unfazed by the possibility of the snow keeping them indoors, however Peeta, is apt to become stir crazy.

While Katniss could go for weeks without seeing anyone, and was much more interested in hunting in solace, he did need to be involved, did need to speak to people. Especially now, as Twelve continued to rebuild, as they continued to pull themselves back together after a rebellion, after a war. It made him feel a part of the District again, after feeling removed from it for so long.

(sponsormusings, "Stuck in a Moment")

Worried that the snowstorm may actually continue, leaving them stranded inside, Peeta decides to call Haymitch in order to check in on him. After a brief discussion, Haymitch agrees to a visit, encouraging Peeta to come over soon. Wrapping up the bread and kissing Katniss good-bye, Peeta heads out.

Summary Analysis. “Stuck in a Moment” seems to be simply a story of Peeta exploring the happiness of his life with Katniss; however, a deeper reading implies a darker meaning behind Katniss and Peeta being “the Mockingjay and the damaged victor” (sponsormusings, “Stuck in a Moment”).

Sponsormusings builds upon the concept of “real or not real” that Collins develops throughout *Mockingjay* as Peeta struggles through his hijacked memories (Collins, 2010, p. 274). Never being able to undo the damage to his mind from the Capitol, Peeta questions others about his memories, as he tries to navigate through the truth. Although it is through Peeta that the idea of what is real and what is not is brought into the original story, reality is a recurring motif throughout the entire series. From the Tribute Parade, to the propaganda films shown throughout the games, to the propos used by both the rebels and the Capitol, Collins develops the question of what is reality, and how does it represent the truth?

In “Stuck in a Moment”, Peeta lives in a reality where he is content and happy, living together with Katniss, in his home of District Twelve. On the surface, sponsormusings paints an idyllic situation where Peeta sees Katniss letting her guard down, believing “that maybe, just maybe, they were beginning to really heal. That things could be good again. That always was a promise they could finally keep” (“Stuck in a Moment”). However, Peeta’s conversation with Haymitch provides clues to the reader that perhaps all is not what it seems.

It rang and rang, the monotonous tone echoing in Peeta's ears, and he was just about to hang up when it connected. "What?"
"Hello to you too, Haymitch."
"Whaddya want, kid? Sleeping here."

"I just wanted to make sure you were okay, that you had enough food. At this stage, it looks like we might be stuck inside for a few more days."

"I got my liquids, and I got some package shit that Effie sent with the last train. I'll survive."

Peeta crossed to the window, parted the curtain slightly so he could look across the street to Haymitch's. It was dark, the drapes closed tightly to the weather outside. "You sure? I baked some bread yesterday, I could come over –"

"Kid, I told you I'm fine. Just stay put. Don't need you getting frozen solid in the middle of the street."

Peeta nodded. "Alright then. I guess **we'll** see you when it lets up."

"We?"

"Katniss and I, of course. Who else?"

Haymitch didn't say anything - he was silent, except for the sound of his laboured breathing down the phone. **When he finally spoke, his voice was low, almost reverent. Almost broken. "Peeta, you remember that Katniss..."**

He trailed off, and Peeta tucked his hand in the pocket of his sweats. "Remember that Katniss what?"

The sound of scratching filtered through the phone line until the old mentor sighed. "Nevermind. But...maybe you should bring some bread over. **Might be a good idea for you to get out of the house for a bit. We both know being cooped up inside isn't the best for you.**"

Peeta laughed. "I knew you were lonely!"

"Yeah, I'm lonely. Something like that." Haymitch coughed. "So, uh come over. I'll be here."

"I'll be there soon."

(sponsormusings, "Stuck in a Moment")

Their conversation takes a turn halfway through when Peeta references himself and Katniss, using "We'll see you when it lets up." Catching his use of the plural first person, Haymitch questions Peeta's meaning, providing the implication that Peeta should be alone. Peeta, taken back by Haymitch's question, answers that he meant he and Katniss.

Haymitch's change in tone to that of "almost reverent, almost broken" indicates that he recognizes a problem with Peeta, and attempts to remind him of something painful concerning Katniss. Breaking off his sentence, Peeta asks "Remember that Katniss what?" but Haymitch is unable to continue. Instead he changes his mind

concerning Peeta coming over, and tells him that it would be good for him to get out of the house.

Before leaving he makes a cup of tea for Katniss, and kisses her goodbye.

Suggested in the last line of the story is the idea that Peeta is aware that his reality with Katniss may not be all that it seems.

He closed the door behind him and headed across the street, part of him already knowing that when he got back, the tea would be cold and untouched.

(sponsormusings, "Stuck in a Moment")

When first reading this story, my conclusion was that Katniss was still suffering from her depression, and had reverted back to her self-imposed Avox state. Peeta, willing her to get better, imagined the conversations between them, creating his own sense of reality; however, the more I read the story, my conclusion changed to that of Katniss having died. With the focus on Peeta, it is necessary to read the story with him in the forefront of the mind. It is not a story about Katniss; it is a story about Peeta and how he feels about her.

Sponsormusings provides clues throughout the story that develop a damaged Peeta, one who is imagining a dead Katniss, especially when he is alone in his home. Even his sub-consciousness, manifested in his imagined Katniss, recognizes that he needs to be out around people in order to maintain a sense of reality.

"But you know how you get when you're housebound for too long. You need the interaction. I feel like very soon I'm probably going to be living with Mr Peeta 'Grumpy' Mellark."

"I won't be grumpy," he promised. "You know there's no one I'd rather be with than you."

With a wry smile, Katniss pulled away, slid out of bed and wrapped his old, deep blue robe around her body. "I know that's true. But **I also know that you like to talk with Haymitch about his geese, and Thom about rebuilding the bakery, and Delly about her kids. You**

know you always go stir-crazy without the company." He watched as she padded across the room and slipped into the bathroom, her feet bare silent against the wooden floorboards. He heard the running of water, light splashes that told him she was likely washing her face.

She was right, Peeta supposed. While Katniss could go for weeks without seeing anyone, and was much more interested in hunting in solace, **he did need to be involved, did need to speak to people.** Especially now, as Twelve continued to rebuild, as they continued to pull themselves back together after a rebellion, after a war. It made him feel a part of the District again, after feeling removed from it for so long.

(sponsormusings, "Stuck in a Moment")

Katniss's ghost-like state is also alluded to as Peeta turns to see her "curled up, much like she had been upstairs in the chair by the window" (sponsormusings, "Stuck in a Moment"). His imagined Katniss is simply *there* in the story, not as an active character, but rather as one who is just there to receive the attention of Peeta.

The "damaged victor", as Peeta describes himself, is much more damaged than previously thought after multiple readings of the story. As he is *stuck in a moment*, whether reliving past memories of Katniss, or imagining what could have been, sponsormusings's Peeta illustrates the effect that a broken heart can have on one's sense of reality of life and of moving on.

"Such Great Heights" by bleachers: Refocalization, Genre Shifting, Character Dislocation (Full Story Available in Appendix M)

Context of the Original Storyworld. Finnick Odair and Annie Cresta are the remaining Victors from District 4. After the rescue of Katniss, Finnick, and others during the Third Quarter Quell, they are all taken to District Thirteen, where they help the rebellion to bring down the Capitol. Finnick though, suffers when he learns that the Capitol has taken his true love, Annie Cresta, prisoner, causing him to not be as much help as anticipated.

...Then there's Finnick Odair, the sex symbol from the fishing district, who kept Peeta alive in the arena when I couldn't. They want to transform Finnick into a rebel leader as well, but first they'll have to get him to stay awake for more than five minutes. Even when he is conscious, you have to say everything to him three times to get through to his brain. The doctors say it's from the electrical shock he received in the arena, but I know it's a lot more complicated than that. I know that Finnick can't focus on anything in 13 because he's trying so hard to see what's happening in the Capitol to Annie, the mad girl from his district who's the only person on earth he loves.

(Collins, 2010, pp. 11-12)

Once reunited, Finnick and Annie eventually marry, providing a much needed moment of happiness during the ongoing rebellion. While observing the newly married couple, Katniss notes their obvious love for one another.

...the wedding is a smash hit. The three hundred lucky guests culled from 13 and the many refugees wear their everyday clothes, the decorations are made from autumn foliage, the music is provided by a choir of children accompanied by the lone fiddler who made it out of 12 with his instrument. So it's simple, frugal by the Capitol's standards. It doesn't matter because nothing can compete with the beauty of the couple. It isn't about their borrowed finery – Annie wears a green silk dress I wore in 5, Finnick one of Peeta's suits that they altered – although the clothes are striking. Who can look past the radiant faces of two people for whom this day was once a virtual impossibility?

(Collins, 2010, p. 226)

Entrance into Fan Fiction. Fan fiction writer bleachers again builds on Collins's original relationship between Finnick and Annie. Similar to the story "Like a River Runs", bleachers creates a new story through the refocalization on Finnick and Annie, changing the location to be set in present day New York City, also changing the genre from that of the original storyworld to one of romance/angst. Remaining true to Collins's main focus on Finnick and his feelings, bleachers writes the story through a third-person, limited point-of-view, focused on Finnick. Readers follow Finnick on New Year's Eve, as he attends a party hosted by his new boss, H. S. Abernathy. Different from Finnick in

Collins's world, who is well-known and popular in crowds, never wanting for companions, Finnick in bleachers world is more reserved, seldom engaging in conversations with others, even when the topic concerns the Mets/Yankees New York rivalry. Although seemingly unlike Collins's, it is actually not all that different when focusing on the main point of the story, the relationship angst between Finnick and Annie that keeps them apart.

As Finnick navigates his way through the party, mingling here and there with his coworkers, he eventually calls it a night. As he retrieves his coat from the coat-check desk, he meets Annie.

The woman smiles at him as she hands him his jacket.

"Thank you," he says as he's shrugging it on. He was the last person in the line, so he figures he might as well take his time.

"It was my pleasure, sir." The words come out in a saccharine uniform and practiced manner. Finnick isn't all that surprised, considering the nature of the event, but something about the woman's voice makes him look up.

Connected to the voice, he finds a woman of around his age with dark chestnut hair and eyes that remind him of the trips to the sea he took with his father.

(bleachers, "Such Great Heights")

It is worth noting that within this story, Annie is described in a similar fashion as she is in Collins's texts. With eyes that "remind him of the trips to the sea", this description aligns well with Finnick and Annie's origins in District Four, the fishing district. Connecting these details to Collins illustrates bleachers understanding of the original storyworld, illustrated through this personal response.

Harkening back to the tragedy that befalls Finnick and Annie's relationship in *Mockingjay*, "Such Great Heights" tells a story of missed opportunities between these two characters also. While leaving the party, after meeting Annie, Finnick finds himself

in need of a cab. After failed attempts at hailing one, Finnick is about to return inside to call for a ride, when Annie comes out. A cab almost immediately stops for her, and as she gets in, she asks Finnick if he is coming also. Rather than staying out in the rain trying to encourage a cab to stop for him, he joins her.

In their short ride together, Finnick learns that Annie is a student at Columbia, studying law, paying her way through school by being a coat check girl. With his alcohol buzz from the party affecting his functionality, Finnick tries to maintain a conversation with Annie, willing “himself to sober up, to not ruin this before it's even started” (bleachers, “Such Great Heights”). As they stop in front of his apartment, Annie leans over and shoves a piece of paper into his hand. Without looking at it, Finnick runs through the pouring rain to his building, clutching the paper. When inside his building, he looks at the paper so that he may add Annie’s phone number to his contacts. To his chagrin, he sees that the ink has smeared due to the rain and his grip on the paper. He can’t make out any of the numbers for sure, but he can tell “Annie had drawn a tiny heart in the corner of the paper.”

Summary Analysis. Whereas Jenkins defines personalization as a fanner placing herself within a story as a *Mary Sue* (2012, p. 172), I believe that personalization is present in each story. “Such Great Heights” is an example of how a fanner can add personal elements to a story that illustrates her reworking of an original as she creates and demonstrates her meaning made of the original. This story could have been set almost anywhere, but bleachers chose New York City. The opening lines of the story express a closeness that the author has with the setting, possibly indicating that she lives in this area.

Somewhere in Bushwick, there is a sidewalk in desperate need of a touch-up. In recent years, it has fallen to a state of functional disrepair, so as a result of the torrential downpour puddles line the street by the time the sun sets over Brooklyn.

(bleachers, “Such Great Heights”)

In addition, bleachers refers to the baseball teams of the New York Mets and the New York Yankees in descriptions of the conversations Finnick hears at the party.

Although a time period is not addressed in the story, a conclusion can be drawn that it is taking place on New Year’s Eve, before the baseball season of 2015, based on the statement Finnick overhears from a coworker – “this season is going to blow last season out of the water, man. We’ve got Rodriguez back. Nothing is going to stop us” (bleachers, “Such Great Heights”). Alex Rodriguez, the third-baseman for the New York Yankees had been suspended the previous year due to allegations of steroid use, and made his return to the team during the Spring 2015 season. Finnick, describing himself as “a long-suffering fan of the Mets”, demonstrates bleachers adding a personalization aspect to the story through her characterization of him. Not only is bleachers a Mets fan, but she also dislikes Alex Rodriguez, as she has almost has Finnick “calling out an overrated performance enhancing drug abuser” before realizing that it “isn’t worth making enemies” (bleachers, “Such Great Heights”).

While Jenkins may not see this as an example of personalization due to the lack of a Mary Sue, I argue that it is, and that each character in a fan fiction story represents some aspect of the reader. When a reader transacts with a text through an aesthetic stance, the “lived through” experience that occurs when a reader extracts her personal meaning, the resulting response demonstrates the dynamic relationship between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 27; 1982, p. 271). The fan fiction response is a

conceptualization of that moment, of the poem, the result of the transaction between the reader and the text, of what “happens” during the meeting of the two (1995, pp. xvi, 33).

**“This Friday Night” by sponsormusings: Genre Shifting and Character Dislocation
(Full Story Available in Appendix N)**

Context of the Original Storyworld. Throughout the entire series of The Hunger Games, Katniss wrestles with her feelings for Peeta, questioning her own motives and reasoning for her actions at the end of the first novel.

...I haven't even begun to separate out my feelings about Peeta. It's too complicated. What I did as part of the Games. As opposed to what I did out of anger at the Capitol. Or because of how it would be viewed back in District 12. Or simply because it was the only decent thing to do. Or what I did because I cared about him.

(Collins, 2008, pp. 358-359)

It is in *Catching Fire*, shortly before the rescue attempt when Katniss begins to realize that her feelings for Peeta go beyond just her constant need to protect him.

...I realize only one person will be damaged beyond repair if Peeta dies. Me.

“I do,” I say. “I need you.” He looks upset, takes a deep breath as if to begin a long argument, and that's no good, no good at all, because he'll start going on about Prim and my mother and everything and I'll just get confused. So before he can talk, I stop his lips with a kiss.

I feel that thing again. The thing I only felt once before. In the cave last year, when I was trying to get Haymitch to send us food. I kissed Peeta about a thousand times during those Games and after. But there was only one kiss that made me feel something stir deep inside. Only one that made me want more. But my head wound started bleeding and he made me lie down.

This time, there is nothing but us to interrupt us. And after a few attempts, Peeta gives up on talking. The sensation inside me grows warmer and spreads out from my chest, down through my body, out along my arms and legs, to the tips of my being. Instead of satisfying me, the kisses have the opposite effect, of making my need greater. I thought I was something of an expert on hunger, but this is an entirely new kind.

(Collins, 2010, pp. 352-353)

Developing this fated love between Katniss and Peeta, fanner sponsormusings, constructs a story where even in alternate universe, Katniss and Peeta would find themselves together.

Entrance into Fan Fiction. Similar to the preceding stories, “This Friday Night” by sponsormusings is set in an alternate universe, utilizing both the techniques of genre shifting and character dislocation. With Katniss and Peeta as the main characters, fanner sponsormusings explores a present day world where these two meet for the first time, in a romantic genre that is different from the series. Incorporated from the original storyworld, sponsormusings does reference people and places within this story that relate back to Collins’s built world. Whether it is the name of the bar, The Seam, or Peeta’s job in graphic designs, sponsormusings fashions her own world based on the foundation created by Collins.

The story begins with Katniss at a bar, drinking alone as she consoles herself over her breakup with her boyfriend, Cato. In the first novel and film, Cato is the male tribute from District Two, a district where many tributes train and volunteer for the games; similar to Cato’s actions in *The Hunger Games*. These tributes are known as Career Tributes, and hail from Districts 1-4 primarily. Although he is not described in detail within the text, he does serve the role as the chief antagonist throughout the first novel. As a Career tribute, he takes charge of the pack of Careers, leading them on the journey to kill all the other tributes, including Katniss. Other than Katniss and Peeta, Cato is the last tribute alive in the 74th Hunger Games, until he is attacked by the genetically engineered mutts, prompting Katniss to shoot him in the head in order to end his suffering.

Choosing Cato as Katniss's boyfriend in this story is interesting, since the most popular love triangle within the series is between Peeta, Katniss, and Gale. While Katniss describes him as a "physical wonder", she also questions his sanity (Collins, 2008, p. 306).

Brutal, bloody Cato who can snap a neck with a twist of his arm, who had the power to overcome Thresh, who has had it out for me since the beginning. He probably has had a special hatred for me ever since I outscored him in training. A boy like Peeta would simply shrug that off. But I have a feeling it drove Cato to distraction. Which is not that hard. I think of his ridiculous reaction to finding the supplies blown up. The others were upset, of course, but he was completely unhinged. I wonder now if Cato might not be entirely sane.

(Collins, 2008, pp. 323-324)

I believe that sponsormusings chose to use Cato rather than Gale because of the reasoning behind why Katniss breaks up with him within this story; due to him cheating on her with another girl, resulting in her becoming pregnant. Katniss describes him in the story as "officially the biggest douchebag she'd ever met in her life", which fits well with Cato in the novel (sponsormusings, "This Friday Night"), but not with Gale. With Katniss's inability to not question whether it was one of Gale's bombs that killed Prim, Gale represents the struggle she feels as she tries to negotiate her feelings for him.

"That was the one thing I had going for me. Taking care of your family," he says. "Shoot straight, okay?" He touches my cheek and leaves. I want to call him back and tell him that I was wrong. That I'll figure out a way to make peace with this. To remember the circumstances under which he created the bomb. Take into account my own inexcusable crimes. Dig up the truth about who dropped the parachutes. Prove it wasn't the rebels. Forgive him. But since I can't, I'll just have to deal with the pain.

(Collins, 2010, p. 367)

As Katniss sits at the bar, she is served a cocktail by the bartender, Haymitch. As bartenders are seen as people to whom others bare their souls, expressing their troubles, it is understandable why sponsormusings would choose Haymitch, Katniss and Peeta's

mentor within the original, to be the bartender who ultimately introduces to them to one another. Based on the description of Haymitch in this story, sponsormusings is using Collins's original text as the basis of the character's appearance. Sponsormusings describes Haymitch in the story as "a man in his mid-forties, with scruffy black hair edging towards salt and pepper", which connects with Collins's description of a younger Haymitch as having "hair dark and curly" (2009, p. 197). While this is not necessary to the understanding of the story or to Haymitch's overall description, it is important to point out that this is a clear example of the fan entering the storyworld through the text, not the film. In the movie *The Hunger Games*, Woody Harrelson portrays Haymitch, with blond, not dark, hair. While we cannot know the exact reason as to why sponsormusings chose to use Collins's description of Haymitch, a conclusion is drawn that this fan is more aligned with the texts, rather than film.

Summary Analysis. Naming the bar within the story *The Seam*, mirrors the relationships between Katniss, Peeta, and Haymitch. While Katniss is the only one actually from the Seam, the poorest part of District Twelve, it does represent home to Peeta and Haymitch as well; it is a part of their destroyed district in the original storyworld. This bar in the story also represents the place where the three come together. Katniss states that she has become a "regular at *The Seam*", and it is implied that Peeta has as well when Haymitch tells him that he hasn't "seen you in a while" (sponsormusings, "This Friday Night"). Another way sponsormusings deftly connects this story to the original is when Haymitch serves Katniss a Firecracker cocktail. In and of itself, this name seems innocuous, however, when one looks to Katniss's role within the original as the girl on fire who sparked a revolution, the name Firecracker is

appropriate. When the metaphorical sparks fly when Katniss and Peeta meet and share this drink, the name of the drink takes on even deeper meaning.

With fan fiction writings being able to include differing universes, it stands to reason that despite the when or where the story is set, Katniss and Peeta would still meet and have a connection. *Mockingjay* ends with Katniss and Peeta returning to District Twelve to rebuild their lives together.

Peeta and I grow back together. There are still moments when he clutches the back of a chair and hangs on until the flashbacks are over. I wake screaming from nightmares of mutts and lost children. But his arms are there to comfort me. And eventually his lips. On the night I feel that thing again, the hunger that overtook me on the beach, I know this would have happened anyway. That what I need to survive is not Gale's fire, kindled with rage and hatred. I have plenty of fire myself. What I need is the dandelion in the spring. The bright yellow that means rebirth instead of destruction. The promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses. That it can be good again. And only Peeta can give me that.

So after, when he whispers, "You love me. Real or not real?"

I tell him, "Real."

(Collins, 2010, p. 388)

Realizing that she belongs with Peeta, Katniss finally is able to give in to her feelings for him, as she recognizes that he is her grounding force. While not to the intensity of the relationship between the two in *The Hunger Games*, "This Friday Night" ends with the two still sitting at the bar, sharing a drink, with the clear implication that they are attracted to each other, and that this is only the beginning.

He smiled, pushed his glasses back up his nose. "Nah, no girlfriend, so I can stay out as long as I like."

The words were like vomit, and she couldn't keep them back. "But I thought you said being cheated on worked out for the better?"

"Oh it did," he assured her, turning to call out their drink order to Haymitch before twisting back to her. "It means that rather than being at home tonight, I'm here. Drinking what very well could be paint stripper, and talking to you."

She rolled her eyes. "Wow. Do you try that on every buzzed girl in every bar?"

"Nope," he shook his head, glanced over at her through those glasses, and under those long, stupid lashes. And when he spoke next, his voice was low, almost throaty. "Never."

Oh.

They sat in silence for a moment, until Haymitch slammed their glasses on the bar - they both looked up in surprise to see him scowling down at them. He pointed dismissively, first at her, then Suit. "She's Katniss. He's Peeta. Drink these, then go and frigging flirt somewhere else. I don't want to see this shit," he grumbled before stalking off.

Suit - Peeta? - chuckled nervously, while she stared down at the bar, horrified. Flirting? She was going to kill Haymitch.

But when she glanced up again, Peeta was looking at her calmly, his blue eyes dancing with amusement. "Well, I can't say much for his technique, but I have to give him points. It's nice to meet you Katniss." He held out a hand, and she paused for a moment before tentatively reaching out her own, sliding her palm into his.

"It's nice to meet you too, Peeta."

(sponsormusings, "This Friday Night")

Sponsormusings uses details of the original, building a bridge between the two texts. It is not hard to imagine that in an alternate universe, one would find people, places, and events that are also found within the original. This is what fan fiction represents, a fanner adding multiple dimensions to an already existing storyworld, through her explorations and personalization of it.

“Valentine's Day Angst” by MaryAnn1819: Expanding the Series Timeline, Genre Shifting (Full Story Available in Appendix O)

Context of the Original Storyworld. Katniss Everdeen faces many situations in The Hunger Games. She is chosen as tribute and must fight to the death, then with a handful of berries she unknowingly challenges the Capitol to begin a rebellion, and finally she must fight to save her family and friends from those in power. And through all of this, she must navigate through the feelings she has for both Gale Hawthorne and Peeta Mellark, trying to decide whom she cannot survive without.

As the first novel begins, readers learn of Katniss's relationship with Gale. In Katniss's own words, there is nothing romantic between them.

There's never been anything romantic between Gale and me. When we met, I was a skinny twelve-year-old, and although he was only two years older, he already looked like a man. It took a long time for us to even become friends, to stop haggling over every trade and begin helping each other out.

Besides, if he wants kids, Gale won't have any trouble finding a wife. He's good-looking, he's strong enough to handle the work in the mines, and he can hunt. You can tell by the way the girls whisper about him when he walks by in school that they want him. It makes me jealous but not for the reason people would think. Good hunting partners are hard to find.

(Collins, 2008, p. 10)

These feelings however are those of a Katniss who has not yet volunteered to compete in the Hunger Games so that her sister will not have to. As the story progresses, and Katniss is forced to evaluate her life and her relationships, she begins to understand that there is something else besides friendship that is holding them together.

Gale gave me a sense of security I'd lacked since my father's death. His companionship replaced the long solitary hours in the woods. I became a much better hunter when I didn't have to look over my shoulder constantly, when someone was watching my back. But he turned into so much more than a hunting partner. He became my confidant, someone with whom I could share thoughts I could never voice inside the fence. In exchange, he trusted me with his. Being out in the woods with Gale... sometimes I was actually happy.

I call him my friend, but in the last year it's seemed too casual a word for what Gale is to me. A pang of longing shoots through my chest. If only he was with me now! But, of course, I don't want that. I don't want him in the arena where he'd be dead in a few days. I just...just miss him. And I hate being so alone. Does he miss me? He must.

(Collins, 2008, pp. 111-112)

Complicating the situation are her feelings for Peeta Mellark, her fellow tribute.

When Peeta announces his love for Katniss, the idea of two star-crossed lovers competing in the games against each sends the Capitol into a frenzy. Building on their popularity,

Katniss and Peeta continue their ruse; although for Peeta, it is actual love, but for Katniss it is a mode of survival.

I can't help comparing what I have with Gale to what I'm pretending to have with Peeta. How I never question Gale's motives while I do nothing but doubt the latter's. It's not a fair comparison really. Gale and I were thrown together by a mutual need to survive. Peeta and I know the other's survival means our own death.

(Collins, 2008, p. 112)

Katniss wrestles with this dilemma throughout *The Hunger Games* as her feelings for Peeta evolve from something that may have begun from fiction, but developed into some real.

In *Catching Fire*, when Peeta realizes that his feelings for Katniss are not reciprocated, the two drift apart, only coming together when necessary. During this time, Katniss regains her familiar comfort with Gale, hunting in the woods; however, when she thinks that a sense of normality may return to their lives, Gale kisses her.

....Then I looked up and there he was, ten feet away, just watching me. Without even thinking, I jumped up and threw my arms around him, making some weird sound that combined laughing, choking, and crying. He was holding me so tightly that I couldn't see his face, but it was a really long time before he let me go and then he didn't have much choice, because I'd gotten this unbelievably loud case of the hiccups and had to get a drink.

We did what we always did that day. Ate breakfast. Hunted and fished and gathered. Talked about people in town. But not about us, his new life in the mines, my time in the arena. Just about other things. By the time we were at the hole in the fence that's nearest the Hob, I think I really believed that things could be the same. That we could go on as we always had. I'd given all the game to Gale to trade since we had so much food now. I told him I'd skip the Hob, even though I was looking forward to going there, because my mother and sister didn't even know I'd gone hunting and they'd be wondering where I was. Then suddenly, as I was suggesting I take over the daily snare run, he took my face in his hands and kissed me.

I was completely unprepared. You would think that after all the hours I'd spent with Gale – watching him talk and laugh and frown – that I would know all there was to know about his lips. But I hadn't imagined

how warm they would feel pressed against my own. Or how those hands, which could set the most intricate of snares, could as easily entrap me. I think I made some sort of noise in the back of my throat, and I vaguely remember my fingers, curled tightly closed, resting on his chest. Then he let go and said, "I had to do that. At least once." And he was gone.

(Collins, 2009, pp. 26-27)

This relationship is rekindled yet again when the rebels rescue Katniss during the Quarter Quell; however, rescuing Peeta from the Capitol is one of Katniss's main goals. While she may not clearly know how she feels for either of them, she does know that both Gale and Peeta are an important part of her life.

Prim's death changes these feelings, making Katniss confront what or who she truly can or cannot live without. Neither Gale nor Katniss can ever know for sure whether it was one of Gale's designed bombs that killed Prim, and it is at this point that Katniss realizes that this is something that she cannot live with, resulting in her letting Gale go.

We stand there, face-to-face, not meeting each other's eyes. "You didn't come see me in the hospital." He doesn't answer, so finally I just say it. "Was it your bomb?"

"I don't know. Neither does Beetee," he says. "Does it matter? You'll always be thinking about it."

He waits for me to deny it; I want to deny it, but it's true. Even now I can see the flash that ignites her, feel the heat of the flames. And I will never be able to separate that moment from Gale. My silence is my answer.

"That was the one thing I had going for me. Taking care of your family," he says. "Shoot straight, okay?" He touches my cheek and leaves. I want to call him back and tell him that I was wrong. That I'll figure out a way to make peace with this. To remember the circumstances under which he created the bomb. Take into account my own inexcusable crimes. Dig up the truth about who dropped the parachutes. Prove it wasn't the rebels. Forgive him. But since I can't, I'll just have to deal with the pain.

(Collins, 2010, pp. 366-367)

Entrance into Fan Fiction. Rounding out the last of the chosen fan fiction stories is "Valentine's Day Angst" by MaryAnn1819. Different from all of the other stories, this one focuses on the relationship between Katniss Everdeen and Gale Hawthorne, known

in fan fiction as Everthorne. Expanding the series timeline to create a story that places Katniss and Gale in the time before the 74th Hunger Games, MaryAnn1819 explores the nature of their feelings for one another, before their fight for survival truly begins.

Following Collins's original storyworld, Katniss and Gale in "Valentine's Day Angst", are hunting companions and friends; however, Katniss begins to question her own feelings for Gale when they begin discussing the upcoming Valentine's Day Dance in the Seam.

Katniss watches him work and tries not to keep thinking about Gale falling in love with someone. For some reason it bothers her more than the thought of him taking girls to the slagheap. To see him get so nervous talking about a girl makes Katniss think he must be really invested in this girl, whoever she is. That he really cares about her, probably more than he even cares about Katniss.

(MaryAnn1819, "Valentine's Day Angst")

Going through school in the following days, Katniss realizes that her jealousy is deeper than she thought, and she might very well be attracted to Gale in way that she had not considered before.

A few girls even comes up to Katniss and ask her if Gale's taking her to the Valentine's Day dance. She doesn't appreciate the question, not just because it's none of their business, but also because it gets her to wondering what it would be like if she and Gale went to the dance together. What would it feel like to dance with him? Would he kiss her? That thought makes her cheeks burn and forces Katniss to come to the unwelcome conclusion that she sort of, maybe, wants Gale to kiss her.

(MaryAnn1819, "Valentine's Day Angst")

Encouraging him to hurry up and ask the girl out, Gale informs her that he can't rush it because "it's too important."

"Well not too much thought. You need to hurry up and handle this." Gale chuckles.

"I'll see what I can do. But I can't rush this one. It's too important."

That makes Katniss's stomach twist uncomfortably. She knows she shouldn't hate this girl just because Gale thinks she's important. She does

sound like she might have a shred of common sense. But if things keep going like this, this girl is going to take Katniss's place as the most important girl in Gale's life besides his mother and Posy. And Katniss knows it's not fair of her to guard that place so jealously, after all, Gale was bound to find a wife at some point, but she's just not ready to give her position up. And she's not sure she ever will be.

(MaryAnn1819, "Valentine's Day Angst")

The following day, Katniss discovers that she is the girl who Gale has fallen in love with as he nervously asks her if she would like to accompany him to the dance.

"You're late," she tells him. He swallows and she notices something seems wrong with him today. She can't quite explain it, but he seems nervous again. "I...I want to talk to you about something."

Now Katniss is nervous, terrified in fact. Gale has never done something like this before and it makes her wonder if something has happened.

"It's nothing bad," he says, quickly seeing her face. "At least I hope not. I really, really hope not."

He swallows.

"So, so the thing is. I-uhm-I know you..." he takes an exasperated breath, gives his head a shake, and then swallows once more. "I know you may not want to go to the Valentine's Day dance, but I-I really like you. And I would like to take you or-or at least do something with you. Take you on some kind of date or...I mean, if you want. If not-"

"Wait," Katniss's brain has finally caught up with the reality of the situation. "You mean-you mean it's me? The girl you like is me?"

Gale swallows again and nods.

"I spent all this time worrying that you were going to fall in love with someone else and replace me and-"

She doesn't get another word out because Gale has cupped her face in his hands and brought his lips down to her own. The feeling of his lips gently pressing on her own vanishes all thought from her mind. When he pulls away he keeps her face close to his, smiling down at her.

"You were worried?"

She tries to think of a clever reply, but her lips are still tingling and she feels light and happy.

(MaryAnn1819, "Valentine's Day Angst")

Summary Analysis. An interesting aspect of this story is that out of the top fifteen stories identified through my imposed filters, this is the only one that develops a story with both Katniss and Gale, focusing on their relationship with one another. During

the height of popularity when the books were published, many merchandising items could be found with Team Peeta or Team Gale, hearkening back to the Twilight Saga drama of Team Edward and Team Jacob. When the movies were released, the debate of who Katniss should choose was slightly resumed; however, at this time, readers were well aware of her choice. The Team Peeta and Team Gale debate is interesting in regards to how readers form attachments to certain characters, and then how these attachments connect to the readers' views of the character's actions.

Perhaps the reason as to why there are not many Katniss and Gale stories is because it is known who she ultimately chooses; however, I believe a more plausible reason is that Peeta is a fully developed character, damaged in such a way that Katniss, as well as readers, tend to grow protective of him. Gale, on the other hand, as his name indicates, is strong and forceful, and is characterized as self-sufficient and full of anger at the Capitol. His anger fuels his actions and beliefs, while Peeta's love and compassion fuel his.

With this story being set outside of the series timeline, MaryAnn1819 is able to explore a pre-rebellion Katniss and Gale, providing a look into what might have been, but the story loses an important element of the storytelling with the lack of the use of Katniss's first-person point-of-view. The use of a third-person, limited point-of-view in this story sets readers apart from Katniss's thoughts, distancing the understanding of what feelings she has concerning Gale.

Collins's The Hunger Games series effectively pulls readers into the world of Katniss as we experience events and learn information at the same time she does. Surrounded by her thoughts and uncertainties, readers are innately familiar with her

insecurities, her fears, and her desires. The lack of first-person point-of-view in “Valentine’s Day Angst” demonstrates this when compared to a similar scene in *Catching Fire*. Below, Katniss describes her feelings during her first kiss from Gale.

I was completely unprepared. You would think that after all the hours I’d spent with Gale – watching him talk and laugh and frown – that I would know all there was to know about his lips. But I hadn’t imagined how warm they would feel pressed against my own. Or how those hands, which could set the most intricate of snares, could as easily entrap me. I think I made some sort of noise in the back of my throat, and I vaguely remember my fingers, curled tightly closed, resting on his chest.

(Collins, 2009, p. 27)

The use of the pronoun I brings a reader into the story, to experience the feelings as Katniss. “Valentine’s Day Angst” sets itself apart with the outside narrator view of the event.

She doesn't get another word out because Gale has cupped her face in his hands and brought his lips down to her own. The feeling of his lips gently pressing on her own vanishes all thought from her mind. When he pulls away he keeps her face close to his, smiling down at her.

(MaryAnn1819, “Valentine’s Day Angst”)

Simply describing the event *tells* readers what is happening, however, with the pronoun I, it *shows* readers so that they may experience it as well.

Findings of Analyses

With multiple readings and copious notes, I was able to frame my findings using my interpretations of the four categories outlined by McKee in his book *Textual Analysis* (2003, pp. 92-100). These categories provided a suitable framework for describing the world of the intertexts surrounding The Hunger Games – other texts in the series (the books, as well as the films), the text genre (dystopian and young adult literature [YAL]), intertexts about the text itself (the academic discourses surrounding the texts), and the public context in which the text is circulated (the discourses surrounding the world of fan

fiction and the stories themselves). My understanding of these surrounding texts framed my analysis of the stories in order to more effectively respond to my research questions of:

- What can fan fiction tell us about how people make meaning as a result of an aesthetic experience?
 - What are the features of dystopian literature and how do the novels and movies in the Hunger Games series demonstrate those features?
 - What patterns of character, themes, plot, and setting are present in the fan fiction stories?
 - How do the themes and characteristics of the genre of dystopian literature compare to the themes presented within the fan fiction stories?
 - How do the fan fiction stories enter into and contribute to the storyworld of The Hunger Games?
 - What examples of critical thinking and critical reading are present in fan fiction stories?

In addition, my role as an English teacher helped to frame my interpretations of The Hunger Games series and the related fan fiction stories. While reading, I was able to draw on my knowledge and skill of examining students' writings, especially those written in response to literature. As an experienced reader, as well as an experienced educator, I approached the stories with the ability to critically examine the writings in order to discern an understanding of what the fanner was most focused on within the writing, as well as what the fanner seemed to find important from the original storyworld. As I began my initial analysis, I made note of the major themes, motifs, and symbols used

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throughout the series – those that I noted, as well as those noted within academic essays and articles related to The Hunger Games (Table 3).

Table 3. Data Analysis Chart of Themes, Motifs, and Symbols Identified within Fan Fiction Stories.

	Bread	Fire	Flowers	Gender Roles	Identity Appearances
1			Gathering plants		
2					
3		Orange for color of fire			
4					Characters true to novel
5	Continuing the bakery				
6	Cheesy buns		Primrose bushes, dandelion		
7					
8		Annie dies in fire, no flood in games			Character true to novel
9		District 12 coal outfit - fire			
10					
11	Peeta baking		Flowers within picture	Peeta=wife Katniss=husband	
12	Peeta baking			Peeta=caretaker	
13					
14					
15				Katniss non-girly	
	Love	Mockingjay	Power	(Concept of) Reality	Wealth Distribution
1	Tragic, die rather than live w/o				
2			Hunger Games	Are they real? Or a movie? Only games	Servant – Avox
3	Emotions drive memories			Hijacked memories vs. reality	
4	Character connection fate				
5	Family love				
6	Family, baby, Haymitch				
7					
8	Finnick's love for Annie – do anything		Sex as power Sex as tool	Memory vs. dream	
9	Gale and Madge				
10	Humorous, sex, not really love				
11	Family			Games relationship vs. life in district	Wealth of Victors vs. district
12	Love that cannot be let go	References Mockingjay		Willing to accept reality of death	

13	Annie and Finnick fate to not be together				
14	Fate with Katniss and Peeta				
15	Gale and Katniss				

1. "As Soon As I Can" by wouldratherbeaunicorn
2. "Cookie Crumbs" by VictoriaAntoine
3. "Exposed Memories" by Leprechaun's Fairy
4. "Fate Is A Fickle Thing" by Ellana-san
5. "Hide and Seek" by sponsormusings
6. "In The Spring" by Writingwife83
7. "In the Wee Small Hours" by ct522
8. "Like a River Runs" by bleachers
9. "Meeting In The Middle" by cutemara
10. "Sharing In Thirteen" by Ellana-san
11. "Sparking Frost" by Miss Ami-chan
12. "Stuck in a Moment" by sponsormusings
13. "Such Great Heights" by bleachers
14. "This Friday Night" by sponsormusings
15. "Valentine's Day Angst" by MaryAnn1819

Texts in the Series: The Hunger Games Storyworld

All fifteen of the fan fiction stories were rooted in the original storyworld created by Suzanne Collins. While some characters were placed into an alternate universe, or into another timeline different from that of the original, all remained true to the essence of the series, whether it was the novels or the films. Due to the films' primarily faithful adaptation of the novels, there are only a few details when added to a fan fiction story that made it obvious to tell into which storyworld the fanner was entering, the novels or the films.

Due to the point of view of the novels, readers are allowed only Katniss's perspective of the events. While the films attempt to add additional details of what is occurring outside of Katniss's understanding, many fanners do the same with their refocalization on other characters, as well as their expanding of the series timeline. These additions allow for more information to be added to the fan fiction stories, thus

developing more characters and events more fully. One such case is that of “Like a River Runs” by bleachers. In the novel *Mockingjay*, the prostitution that Finnick is forced to endure is referenced during a propos used to distract the Capitol during a rescue attempt. Using this information, bleachers creates a story set outside of the series timeline, focused on Finnick, that further develops an example of him using sex in order to trade for help with saving his love Annie Cresta in the arena.

Other examples are the stories focused on Haymitch Abernathy and Effie Trinket, along with Plutarch Heavensbee and Fulvia Cardew. Haymitch and Effie appear in “Fate in a Fickle Thing” by Ellana-san. While written in an alternate universe, the relationship between these two characters is explored; however, it is not a part of the original storyworld. The same can be said about “Sharing in Thirteen” also written by Ellana-san, as she further explores the relationship of Haymitch and Effie, along with that of Plutarch Heavensbee and Fulvia Cardew. Set in District Thirteen, the close working relationship of Plutarch and Fulvia is expanded from that within the novel, to one where the two are romantically linked. Ellana-san builds upon the textual world, rather than the films with the inclusion of Fulvia, who is absent from the movies.

VictoriaAntoine also adds to Effie Trinket’s story through an expansion of the series timeline that develops a backstory for the character. Effie, the district escort for Katniss and Peeta, epitomizes the beliefs of the Capitol when first introduced. VictoriaAntoine, in “Cookie Crumbs”, writes a story that shows a young Effie viewing the Hunger Games with her mother, as she questions whether or not the games are real. Interestingly, the Effie in “Cookie Crumbs” grows up to be the antithesis of the Effie first introduced, causing readers to question what it is that defines our beliefs.

Fanner cutemara, in “Meeting in the Middle”, rewrites the Reaping Ceremony and Tribute Parade of *The Hunger Games* with Gale Hawthorne and Madge Undersee as the main protagonists. Similar to Collins’s use of the first-person point-of-view, cutemara gives voice to both characters as she explores their feelings for one another. Utilizing Madge as a character illustrates cutemara’s use of the texts as the basis for her entry into the storyworld, as Madge is not a character within any of the films.

The Text Genre: Dystopian Literature

Reading through the selected fan fiction stories, it is clear that none of them include any added dystopian characteristics, and few even address the dystopian elements outlined by Scholes and Ostenson (2013). In the stories set in an alternative universe (AU) through genre shifting and/or character dislocation, each lack evidence of any dystopic characteristics. While the other stories are set in Collins’s original world, they also lack the inclusion of dystopian aspects, unless specific in the series. These fanners accept Collins’s world as created, and choose instead to focus on the features regarding the relationships between the characters through an exploration into their backstories, or through further development of the events within the original texts.

With the fan fiction stories being based within a created, dystopian world, many of the fanners chose to change the genre of their story to that of one other than science fiction or fantasy, two genres with which *The Hunger Games* series could be described. Instead, thirteen of the fifteen stories are labeled with romance being listed as at least one of the genres, with the remaining two stories’ genres identified as drama and drama and friendship (Table 5). Through accepting the original storyworld, the fanners are able to

negotiate their meaning of the story as they create their own world based within the dystopian construct developed by Collins.

Table 4. Fanfiction.net Genres and Chosen Fan Fiction Stories' Genres.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Adventure															
Angst								X					X		
Crime															
Drama		X				X	X		X		X				
Family					X										
Fantasy															
Friendship											X				
General															
Horror															
Humor				X						X				X	
Hurt/Comfort															
Mystery															
Parody															
Poetry															
Romance	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Sci-Fi															
Spiritual															
Supernatural															
Suspense															
Tragedy	X														
Western															

1. "As Soon As I Can" by wouldratherbeaunicorn
2. "Cookie Crumbs" by VictoriaAntoine
3. "Exposed Memories" by Leprechaun's Fairy
4. "Fate Is A Fickle Thing" by Ellana-san
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14. "This Friday Night" by sponsormusings
15. "Valentine's Day Angst" by MaryAnn1819

Intertexts about the Text: The Academic Discourses Surrounding the Texts

As a secondary English teacher who has used the novels within my own classroom, I have come across many different articles pertaining to The Hunger Games, especially articles concerning its literary value and its possible use in classrooms. I am familiar with the use of symbols and recurring motifs used, in addition to the themes that many academics have referenced as being important aspects of the story.

As a result of the popularity of The Hunger Games, numerous academic articles and essays have been written. In the books *Of Bread, Blood and The Hunger Games* and *Approaching The Hunger Games Trilogy: A Literary and Cultural Analysis* the authors of the various essays have read The Hunger Games series and have found different aspects of importance within the story; just as with any reading of a novel, each reader will resonate with different aspects of the story. As a whole, these various essays added to my understanding of the thematic trends found throughout the story. In a similar fashion to the process Scholes and Ostenson's used in their research concerning dystopian novels (2013), I created a chart listing the themes, motifs, and symbols I noted within my multiple readings of the series, in order to cross reference the occurrence of those same elements within the fan fiction stories (Table 3).

While reading the fan fiction stories, I focused on many different elements: the entrance to the storyworld, the character perspectives, the faithfulness to the original, the stories' themes. In addition, I noted the use of various symbols and motifs that used by Collins within the original. Included in Table 3, "Data Analysis Chart of Themes, Motifs, and Symbols Identified within Fan Fiction Stories", are the results of my findings during my readings. Most notable is the theme of love throughout the stories.

Readers of the series are aware of the love story between Katniss and Peeta as she negotiates the feelings she has for him, while trying to also understand the feelings she has for her best friend, Gale Hawthorne. While not all of the fan fiction stories concern Katniss and Peeta's relationship, all, except for "Cookie Crumbs" by VictoriaAntoine, do focus on some sort of love, whether it is romantic, familial, or sexual. With the majority of the stories revolving around Katniss and Peeta, the theme of their romantic love is developed; however, different from Collins's original, these stories focus primarily on only the relationship, and not on the events within the plot.

Another theme that reoccurs in a few of the fan fiction stories is the questioning of what is real, and of what is not. Created as an actual question by Peeta in the novel *Mockingjay*, the idea of questioning reality begins as early in the first novel when Katniss is put through a makeover for the Tribute Parade, and realizes that she has a part she can play in order to receive sponsors. Understanding that what is filmed in the games is a manipulation of reality in order to gain ratings, Katniss develops the skills to *play the game*, helping both her and Peeta to survive. Throughout the entire series, Collins addresses the question of how perceptions and views affect the ways in which readers see what is real, and fanners recognize the importance of this as it is added to the layers within their stories.

VictoriaAntoine, again in "Cookie Crumbs", tackles the innocence of a child watching the games, striving to understand if what is happening is real or a movie. Her mother, unclear as to why her daughter is upset, states that they are only games, indicating the belief, that although they may be real, they do not actually matter. In "Exposed Memories", Leprechaun's Fairy adds to Collins's story of Peeta losing his *real*

memories to the hijacking of the Capitol. Recognizing the power of love and intimacy, Katniss reminds him of a night shared between them that will counteract the Capitol's claim on his mind. One story that challenges the concept of reality on a deeper level as it connects to the acceptance of loss is "Stuck in a Moment" by sponsormusings. Characterized in this story is a Peeta who is damaged, both emotionally and psychologically, to the point that he imagines Katniss being there in the house with him, although it is implied that she is not. Being unable to accept the reality of his situation, he creates his own sense of the world where Katniss remains with him always.

The primary symbol used through the series is that of the Mockingjay, both the bird itself, as well as Katniss as the living embodiment of it, as she becomes the symbol of the rebellion. With such a strong symbol used throughout the series, it is interesting to see that it is only referenced in one story, that of "Stuck in a Moment". Due to my finding that the nature of the chosen fan fiction stories are primarily concerned with the relationships between characters, it stands to reason that Collins's symbol would not find a place within the majority of the stories. Only one of the stories occurs as a vignette focused on both Katniss and Peeta, occurring during the time of the rebellion, and it is more focused on Peeta's memories rather than the war with the Capitol (Leprechaun's Fairy, "Exposed Memories"). All of the other stories are outside of the series timeline, or set in alternate universe where the mockingjay is nonexistent. The only symbol used repeatedly throughout the series, which also appears within a few of the stories is that of bread.

Peeta, aptly named after a type of bread, is the son of a baker. With bread being used throughout the novels as a symbol of food and sustenance, Peeta himself symbolizes

this to Katniss; her need of nourishment, as supplied by him. The name Hunger Games represents not only the games mandated by the Capitol, but also the figurative struggle that Katniss endures as she searches for what will cease her hunger, whether it be safety, peace, or love. It is at the end of the series when she realizes that it is Peeta that she needs to survive. Continuing the bread motif through Peeta, fanners maintain this characteristic within their stories. Whether Peeta is making cheesy buns for a pregnant Katniss (writingwife83, “In the Spring”), or bringing bread to a hungover Haymitch (Miss Amichan, “Sparkling Frost”), he is a representation of something or someone who is needed by others in order for them to survive.

The Public Context in which the Text is Circulated: Fan Fiction and Fandom Discourses

Fan fiction allows for alternating interpretations that continue an already established story. Whereas fan fiction can be thought of as just the rewriting of another’s established storyworld, a fan fiction writer, a fanner, must rely on the knowledge of the already existing text. This knowledge involves an in-depth reading and understanding of the storyworld, as well as knowledge of the fandom. Focusing on Rosenblatt’s efferent-aesthetic continuum, it can be seen in the chosen fan fiction stories, that these fanners entered the reading of The Hunger Games, both efferently and aesthetically. “Exposed Memories” by Leprechaun’s Fairy describes Katniss trying to help Peeta recall his memories that were hijacked by the Capitol. Focusing on details within the original, which were identified through an efferent reading, such as the conversation regarding Peeta’s favorite color, as well as the video monitoring of Tributes at all times,

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Leprechaun's Fairy effectively creates a story that is true to the original, through an aesthetic response that details her own *living through* the text.

These aesthetic fan fiction responses represent the aesthetic entrance into the storyworld through the fanners' personalization of it, as they make it their own.

Remaining true to the original storyworld, fanner bleachers is able to place personal aspects within her story of "Such Great Heights". Detailing aspects of New York City, along with references to the city's baseball teams of the New York Mets and the New York Yankees, this story describes Finnick Odair and Annie Cresta finding their way to one another, only to be thwarted by bad luck keeping them apart. The inclusion of these seemingly personal aspects – feelings concerning the suspension and then return of Alex Rodriguez to the New York Yankees, as well as the Yankees vs. Mets rivalry – adds an deeper dimension that clearly illustrates a fanner living within a story, albeit without placing herself personally within it.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

“There is no such thing as a generic reader or a generic literary work; there are only the potential millions of individual readers or the potential millions of individual literary works. A novel or a poem or a play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols. The literary work exists in the live circuit set up between reader and text: the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols, and those symbols channel his thoughts and feelings.”

(Rosenblatt, 1995a, p. 24)



Imagine that this circle represents a reader's life experiences. Her

knowledge and life experiences are contained within the circle, and will not extend outside of it. This is the world in which she lives, which shapes who she is.

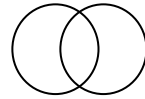


Now imagine that this circle represents the life experience of what it is like

to live within a fictional storyworld. Perhaps it is a strictly structured society, with class divisions and filled with heartache and strife. Perhaps this is a futuristic world, where oppression rules the land and people must turn against one another in order to survive. Or maybe it is a fantastical world where magic exists. Maybe this world is described from the viewpoint of a seventeen-year-old girl or possibly a fourteen year-old-boy. The worlds and experiences are separated by time, space, culture, and perhaps even gender. Whatever the case, the two worlds exist separate from one another and will never meet. Or will they?

As Louise Rosenblatt elucidated in her work *Literature as Exploration* (1995), the act of reading is the exploration of another world, a storyworld sometimes different from our own. When we open a book to read, we are actually opening a door to another world, allowing our circles to overlap. It is here where we as readers can experience what it may

be like to have to fight to the death in barbaric gladiatorial games, or to suffer the heartbreak of losing a loved one, or perhaps to face the literal or figurative monsters of our nightmares.



When the circles overlap, readers are able to see and understand the storyworld and its characters, thus allowing them to become *real*. This illustrates what Rosenblatt describes as the aesthetic experience. By the overlapping of these worlds, readers not only begin to understand the characters and text on a deeper level, but they also begin to connect to the story; they fully enter the storyworld. To connect so deeply with a story and its characters is to truly have an aesthetic experience, resulting in a reader questioning what is real or what is reality; in schools, this to be celebrated and nurtured. To help students move towards an intrinsically driven exploration of a text, we must accept that the teacher is not an authority “representing the meaning and background of the literary work as a catalyst of discussion, encouraging a democracy of voices expressing preliminary responses to the text and building group and individual understandings” (Roen & Karolides, 2005, p.59). When this occurs, student readers are empowered.

Entering and Exploring the Storyworld.

"More and more, storytelling has become the art of world building, as artists create compelling environments that cannot be fully explored or exhausted within a single work or even a single medium."

~Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, p. 116

The storyworld is a concept that helps us understand the phenomenon of fan fiction. A storyworld is bigger than one text. It is a virtual reality, co-constructed through our imaginations. A storyworld is well articulated but not easily described. It is bounded but not fixed. We can only glimpse its elusive existence through traces left by its

inhabitants. When we study storyworlds, we are archaeologists of the mind. Evidence of the storyworld is found in print, other media, material artifacts, and the discourse of those involved, but our view of any storyworld is always incomplete. Our window into these worlds is the analysis of the temporal products of those who *live through* the events, have relationships with characters, try on the thoughts and feelings of others, and explore their own lives through trying on other lives. Analysis of these responses, as Rosenblatt terms them, enables us to characterize how people make diverse yet communal meaning of our lives. Fan fiction is one such type of response.

Literature and story provide us with both a mirror of the norms and issues of a culture, while at the same time illuminating pathways for the future. Fanners don't rework the story; they enter into and become a citizen of it. Rosenblatt states it best with "The reader seeks to participate in another's vision – to reap knowledge of the world, to fathom the resources of the human spirit, to gain insights that will make his own life more comprehensible" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 7). Fan fiction is a tangible example of how fanners explore the storyworld, personalizing it to make it their own as they respond to the text.

Findings and Interpretations

Through this study I investigated characteristics of illustrated meaning-making of the storyworld of The Hunger Games evident in the chosen readings, while noting many similarities regarding the nature of the stories. Many of the features inherent within the writings relate to the deeper development of Collins's characters as fanners explored differing point-of-views and perspectives. These fanners, participating as both readers

and fans of the original, determined their own meaning of Collins's text, which allowed for them to explore their understanding.

While I set out with an assumption that fanners would incorporate elements of the world created by Collins, I have determined that the dystopian aspect of the storyworld of The Hunger Games is not what outwardly appeals to these fanners; rather, they are the characters themselves and their relationships with one another to which the fanners connect. Instead of addressing or attempting to solve the societal problems within the original story, these fanners have accepted Collins's world and its solutions therein, and have thus moved to the emotional connections found within the story, to the connections with the characters themselves. Otherwise stated, it is not that they chose to ignore the dystopian aspects, but rather, they chose to accept it as is, and instead explored the relationships and characters in their fan fiction.

In *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*, Rosenblatt states "what each reader makes of the text is, indeed, *for him* [italics in original] the poem, in the sense that this is his only direct perception of it" (1978, p. 105). As the poem is the result of the transaction between the reader and the text, the meeting between the two, Rosenblatt stipulates that the poem will only occur if the "reader performs in a certain way", through an aesthetic approach (1995, pgs. xvi, 33). This does not mean that the only purpose of reading is to make personal connections, but rather it is the first step of growth leading towards the ability for deeper reflection so that emotional responses can be expanded (1995, xviii). A reader approaching a text through an aesthetic stance not only allows for the poem to occur, but also allows for the reader to focus more directly on the affective aspects of the reading, helping to provide a "*living through*, not simply *knowledge about* [italics in

original]” (1995, p. 38). The argument that the dystopian aspects do not matter is that the fan fiction response is the representation of the transaction between the text and the reader. The reader accepts the world as stated in the text, accepts the storyworld as is, and now simply continues with a new story, staying true to the characterizations put forth by Collins.

This supports the belief that it is this experience, the creation of the poem, that I believe a fan fiction writing represents; the tangible aesthetic response that illustrates what was important to the reader during that reading, at that time. With acceptance of the original storyworld, fanners negotiate their own meanings and exploration of the story through their fan fiction, focused on that which connects to them the most, the characters. Whereas I assume that these fanners cannot relate to or understand on a personal level many of the extreme dystopian elements found in The Hunger Games series, they can and do relate to the characters’ thoughts and feelings – of true love, of love lost, of longing, and of heartbreak. This demonstrates a critical reading and understanding of the text that may not focus on that which adults or critics focus, but instead demonstrates deep understandings of characters that mirror our own human motivations and psychology. These stories include aspects and illustrations of human interactions and relationships, demonstrated by the characters engaging in feelings of love, happiness, sadness, and anger. The Hunger Games series tell the story of a young woman wanting to simply save her sister, and inadvertently beginning a rebellion against a totalitarian government. Rather than continuing this struggle, these fanners choose to create worlds where the importance lies in the relationships built and maintained between characters; how they continue to live as they deal with their love, as well as losses.

As a response to the text of *The Hunger Games*, each fan fiction story represents the fanner's analysis of the original, through their written interpretation of the meaning they made. While they may not focus on the thematic elements and deeper literary analysis elements such as symbolism, they do represent the fanner's personalization of the text through their focus on specific aspects of the story. With their intrinsic desire to share their understandings of *The Hunger Games*, fanners contributed to the online fan fiction community of Fanfiction.net, uploading their responses. The innate desire to write and share fan fiction illustrates a fanner's desire to make sense of what was read in the original through rewriting it with their own personal characteristics added. In my experience, many secondary English teachers are more concerned with the efferent meanings gained from texts, rather than creative, open responses such as these represented by the fanners' stories. While these responses may not represent what some teachers believe they should in regards to a traditional, textbook formula, the stories very well do represent the fanners' representations of what the original text *means* to each of them.

Discussion

It is the term *response* that began my journey, as I questioned my own use of the word. While a student may articulate through writing or speaking what a text *means*, it is what the response itself illustrates about the meaning that needs further research. Education has moved to a state of isolated assessment, where students are expected to write in response to a text in order to demonstrate understanding. The issue concerning me most is how we in turn assess these responses. Without understanding the very nature

Responding to the Storyworld of The Hunger Games through Fan Fiction Fandoms

of response, or what it means to respond to a text, how can we effectively help our students to become more active participants in the act of reading and understanding?

As a result of my research, my belief is not that educators need to value fan fiction, although I do believe it best represents a reader's aesthetic response. Instead, educators, as well as academics and assessors, need to renegotiate what a response to literature is, and what it is that readers can do to share their understanding of what the text means. These chosen fan fiction stories incorporated themes, motifs, and symbols that many teachers would have their own students to identify while reading the novels; however, due to the nature of fan fiction being intrinsically driven, these fanners included them on their own, while also continuing to build upon many of the characters' development. These texts, both those of the original storyworld as well as the response to such, represent so much more than simply a response. They represent a part of the writer, as she shares her own understandings of their world.

In his book *Approaching the Hunger Games Trilogy: a Literary and Cultural Analysis*, Tom Henthorne writes on the changing nature of literature regarding not only the ways in which texts are written, but also the ways in which these texts are received. He argues that The Hunger Games series offers the opportunity for readers to enter into the fictive world in order to supplement "it with their own imaginings as they fill in gaps or develop suggestions and possibilities that are left open by the text" (2012, p. 150). Allowing for the opportunity to engage in world building, fan fiction provides a textual sandbox in which fanners may experiment with their own understandings. Through this figurative play with the textual piece, fanners are aesthetically responding to the story in ways that help them to demonstrate their understandings of the writing.

If, however, we define written texts not as words set upon pages but as representations of people's cultural lives that acquire meaning only when actualized by readers, both as individuals and as part of knowledge communities, then, by definition, all written texts are interactive, multi-authored, authored, open-ended, and haphazard: as co-creators, readers actively participate in the meaning-making process, drawing upon their own knowledge and experience as they establish understandings of texts, understandings that, in many cases, could not possibly have been anticipated.

(Henthorne, 2012, p. 154)

In addition, Henthorne argues that texts are the representations of people's cultural lives, and that meaning is achieved only when discovered by readers – thus all texts are interactive in nature as multiple new meanings are attributed to it through multiple readings, by multiple readers. The meaning will vary due to the fact that readers will vary. Fan fiction responses are examples of this – the building of worlds and the demonstrating of meaning. I myself continue this cycle by attributing my own meanings to the fan fiction stories themselves; the cycle ends only when there are no more readers.

The Aesthetic Response as Readers Envision the Storyworld

Judith Langer uses the word envisionment as she refers to “the world of understanding a person has at a given point in time” (2011, p. 10). With envisionments always being in a state of change as a person grows and evolves, through experiencing and gaining new ideas, Langer labels this constant shift as “envisionment building” (Langer, 2011, p. 10). While each person has multiple envisionments occurring at multiple times, Langer further describes this term in regards to literature, as it represents “the understanding a student (or teacher) has about a text – whether it is being read, written, discussed, or tested” (2021, p. 11). These envisionments continue to evolve as students and teachers continue to do so also.

In a similar fashion to that of Louise Rosenblatt's transaction that occurs between readers and the text, envisionment building is an "activity in sense-making, where meanings change and shift and grow as a mind creates its understandings of a work" (Langer, 2011, p. 15). Because of a reader's constantly changing experiences, different texts may be read at different times, with readers achieving what Rosenblatt describes as a different *poem* with each new reading (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 20). The reader and the text may remain the same, but the experience, the event, will change. In essence, each poem or envisionment is the result of a particular text being read at a particular time, in a particular environment, at a particular moment in the life of the reader (Langer, 2011, p. 16; Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 20). Just as a fan fiction story represents an aesthetic response resulting in the poem, it also represents one envisionment of the understanding of the original storyworld, at one particular place in time as the fanner composed the writing. The intrinsic value of literature resides in the reader living through the transaction with the text.

As seen in the analyses, a few of the fan fiction stories were written by the same authors. To remain true to the imposed filtering, I decided to keep stories that were listed, even if an author had multiple stories chosen. As can be seen from the following totals (Table 5), many of the fanners have multiple stories that are based within the storyworld of The Hunger Games. Fanner sponsormusings, with 65 fan fiction stories written on The Hunger Games, demonstrates with each new story, a new response to the original texts that differs from her previously written pieces. Her responses specifically help to support both Rosenblatt's and Langer's claims that the response is an illustration of a specific

reader's understood meaning of a text, at a specific time, in a specific environment, in a specific moment in the reader's life.

Table 5. Total Number of Fanners' The Hunger Games Fan Fiction Stories.

Fanner	Number of The Hunger Games Fan Fiction Stories on Fanfiction.net	Number of The Hunger Games Fan Fiction Stories Chosen as Data
wouldratherbeaunicorn	4	1
VictoriaAntoine	2	1
Leprechaun's Fairy	1	1
Ellana-san	29	2
sponsormusings	65	3
Writingwife83	1	1
ct522	49	1
bleachers	2	2
cutemara	1	1
Miss Ami-chan	6	1
MaryAnn1819	2	1

Within this transaction between the reader and the text, Rosenblatt outlines that the basic model of the reading process simply “consists in the response to cues” (1978, p. 54). Readers adopt either an efferent or aesthetic stance, and then develop a framework, organizing principles, relating to the organization of the text. This is followed by expectations that influence responses, which may lead to the adjustment of the framework, resulting in the final synthesis. To understand the transaction means to understand both what the reader and the text contribute to the experience, understanding not only what the text *says* but also *how* the reader shapes his experience through the reading process. It is the transaction between the two. The experience is where the meeting of the minds, the text and the reader, occurs.

Langer also develops different, nonlinear stances that readers may assume as they approach literature. *Being Outside and Stepping into an Envisionment* describes the actions readers take when first approaching a text about which they know little, as they

gather their beginning ideas. Using their own knowledge and experiences, readers begin to form broad understandings concerning the interactions of the plot, characters, conflict within the text (Langer, 2011, p. 17). In the stance of *Being Inside and Moving through an Envisionment*, readers within the storyworld connect their personal knowledge, the text, and the social context of reading to any new information so that they may build connections among thoughts as they create an understanding of what the text is about (Langer, 2011, p. 18). Different from the others, the stance of *Stepping Out and Rethinking What You Know* requires readers to look to their own understandings and ideas in order gain insights as to how the text relates to their own lives (Langer, 2011, p. 19). Separating the reader's personal experiences from the text, the stance of *Stepping Out and Objectifying the Experience* requires readers to look more analytically at the text, trying to determine what it means (Langer, 2011, p. 20). The final stance, *Leaving an Envisionment and Going Beyond*, represents readers moving beyond the initial text by using their well-developed envisionments as they apply it to future situations (Langer, 2011, p. 21).

Of the fan fiction stories I chose, many represent examples of Langer's *Being Inside and Moving through an Envisionment* as they incorporate Jenkin's personalization aspect of entering into a storyworld. In fan fiction writer bleacher's "Such Great Heights", she incorporates many personal aspects of New York as she references the rivalry between the Yankees and Mets, in addition to comments regarding New York Yankees' player Alex Rodriguez, as he returns to the team after his infamous steroid-use suspension.

I believe that fan fiction stories represent a tangible example of a reader's aesthetic response, and I believe that research can be taken another step further as I continue to investigate the characteristics of what the nature of a response to literature is by examining these stories using the framework of Langer's envisionment stances. By building upon my initial research, I can delve into a deeper understanding of literature responses through these multiple layers of envisionments, stances, and entrances into a storyworld.

Incorporating Henry Jenkins into Reader Response Theories. Through using Henry Jenkins's "Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show" as a framework for analysis on how fanners enter the storyworld of The Hunger Games, I believe that there is a place for him among other reader response theorists, in regards to understanding how readers immerse themselves into an already created world. His techniques provide the structure for how readers can enter the storyworlds in order to illustrate through their fan fiction their understandings of the texts and of what meaning they have made, as they negotiate their understandings through the development of their story. By including Jenkins into the world of response theories, it allows for educators to question our own understandings of what it means to interact with a text, as well as our understandings of how readers respond to a text.

Building upon Research

Exploring the nature of fan fiction and its use within classrooms is not a new concept within research. Much has been written concerning the writing processes utilized within this collaborative space, and the benefits, as well as the drawbacks that may occur. In Kristina Busse and Karen Hellekson's *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of*

the Internet: New Essays (2006), they build upon the research similar to that of Henry Jenkins, as they compile varying essays that explore contemporary fan communities, and the practices held within. One essay in particular, by Deborah Kaplan, explores character development within novel-length fan fiction texts.

In her essay, “Construction of Fan Fiction Character through Narrative”, Kaplan argues that current cultural studies analyze fan fiction texts in relation to the fandom, not as close readings within a literary analysis framework. In her research, she explores the character development through a textual analysis, incorporating strategies of close reading so that she may analyze the narrative structures within the fan fiction (2006, Location 1937-1938). Focusing on the continued character development of these original storyworld creations, fanners utilize the understood knowledge of the characters in order to add more depth to aspects of personality that may have been absent in the original. Relying on the “dynamic critical space where multiple interpretative activities can take place”, fanners must develop their characters to be “well-rounded and carefully drawn” so that they may be accepted by others in these communities (Kaplan, 2006, Locations 2169-2173).

Kaplan’s work relates back to the study completed by James Marshall in 1987, as he examined the effects of writing activities on students’ textual understandings, through an analysis of three differing types of responses: restricted, personal analytic and formal analytic. Framing his study through the theoretical frameworks of reader response theories, Marshall focuses his study on the “role of writing in determining what students take away from literary texts” (1987, pp. 31-32). Differing from previous research, he

looks to the writing tasks themselves, rather than the writers, examining the relationship between the writing and the literary understanding.

Shaping his understandings of the responses through the individual portraits of the students, Marshall analyzed the writings framed within the context of the instruction provided to the students by the teacher in the classroom. His findings support what is still common in many secondary English classrooms, that students are often times not aware of alternating approaches to literature that differ from that of the teacher (1987, p. 40). Relating to today's schooling, in classrooms, the evaluation of an aesthetic response is challenging but it should be used to inform the discourse in which engage as readers and critics. The aesthetic response does not *tell* us what a student knows; it *shows* us what she understands.

Marshall's results defend the power of extended writings used within classrooms to help enrich the students' responses. What I believe to still be the case in many classrooms, as well as in standardized assessments, is that in regards to the act of writing essays to specified prompts, students see it as an occasion to fulfill the teacher's expectations, instead of intrinsically thinking about what they have read in order to better understand the meaning. Although fan fiction has many positive attributes, it is not a mode of literary analysis to be used all of the time as a type of response to literature; however, as seen by the analyses of the chosen fan fiction stories, it does offer insight into the meanings and understandings garnered by fanners as they navigate through textual storyworlds.

Future Implications

Impact for Changing Education

In Rebecca Black's work, *Adolescents and Online Fan Fiction* (2008), she discusses the changing nature of literacy instruction within schools, noting that as education progresses through the twenty-first century, evolving to a more networked society, school's and teacher's pedagogical practices will need to evolve (p. 122). In a fashion similar to the work of Marshall (1987) and Gee and Hayes (2010) concerning the need for the changing nature of instruction in schools, Black outlines the differences between online fan fiction sites and school writing spaces, arguing for more authentic types of writing and social interaction between peers. She shares her belief that by analyzing the literacy practices evident in fan fiction writings, educators may more easily understand and appreciate these out-of-school practices in order to foster growth within our own classrooms.

Black's main points of difference between traditional schools and online fan fiction communities include: the writing processes, the role of the teacher and of the writer, and creativity. The writing artifacts generated within classrooms represent the "academically valued genres of writing; grammatical, orthographic, and print-based conventions; as well as more tangible tools such as writing and drawing utensils paper, and sometimes the computer" (2008, p. 124). The prompts offered, or the writings tasks assigned, traditionally tend to further the curricular goals, with the teacher remaining as the authority figure in the classroom (2008, p. 125).

Differing from this is the self-direction allowed for within online fan fiction communities. The fanners within the site have more choice as to what they may write,

and they need not follow the scripted writing process used in school, i.e., outlining, pre-writing, rough draft, revisions, etc. Their authority figure may vary from themselves to that of other readers who engage in conversations regarding the writing, allowing for more freedom in how they choose to achieve their writing goal (Black, 2008, p. 126).

Fanners may also reach outside of the confines of the online community to other funds of knowledge, whether that of academic knowledge or community knowledge. On the other hand, school resources are often limited to a confined view of literacy, revolving around predetermined texts and responses (Black, 2008, pp. 126-127).

Sharing my concern of teachers being pressured to help students pass standardized tests, rather than fostering their creativity within classrooms, Black notes the changing curricular demands brought about due to these assessments (2008, p.129).

While creativity and innovation are valued as 21st century workplace skills, schools are limiting their roles within classrooms, under the guise of authentically assessing students. Fan fiction though offers students the opportunities to engage in authentic, meaningful writing, while collaborating with likeminded individuals.

I believe that fan fiction communities offer students a safe environment that they may enter in order to negotiate through the understandings of a text. While I believe that the overuse of it within a classroom will detract from the engagement felt by students, it is an act of writing to be valued, as it helps educators to navigate through their own understandings of what it means to respond to literature.

Researcher Reflections

This study began as an exploration into the nature of fan fiction stories as tangible representations of aesthetic responses; however, it evolved also into a journey of self-

discovery as I reflected on my own teaching practices and philosophy. While my goal was to illustrate the value that is found in a fan fiction story as it represents a critical reading, the journey also brought forth more questions that I have as I continue my teaching, as well as my research. How I view responses to literature within my own classroom is something that I will continue to address throughout my career, and as I do so, I hope to also encourage my fellow secondary, English teachers to also question their own beliefs concerning what it is that they expect as a response to literature, as well as how we approach the teaching of literature within our classrooms.

Through this study, I am now more able to further explore the pedagogical implications of fan fiction for classrooms, demonstrating the importance of valuing student responses to texts that are authentic and meaningful. The critical implications surround the argument that a student's response is what is valuable, despite the text on which it is based. Through this research, I illustrated that fanners' fan fiction responses demonstrate critical thinking and analysis of an already existing storyworld through their exploration into the original.

By these closely analyzed fan fiction stories, it is shown that it does not matter what the text is that is being read, but rather how the student responds to it, as well as how the teacher helps to foster this transaction. Rather than thinking of text complexity belonging to the text, we now need to expand our understanding to that of text complexity being determined by how the reader *transacts* with the text. It is the reader who brings meaning to the work, and the same can be said of complexity; it is the readers' skills or lack thereof that determine the understandings of the text. To do this, teachers must relinquish the reliance on text exemplars, and instead look to the texts with

which students are engaged in order to understand the worlds in which students enter. The students' critical understandings of these texts may be represented through more creative, open-ended responses, instead of the traditional in-class essay response to a prompt. It may prove to be a challenge, but by understanding the nature of readers' responses, teachers can build the skills necessary for readers to understand and transact with any text. It is the complexity of thought that is important for educators to teach, rather than the so-called complexity of a text. Critical reflection of texts crosses all genres of literature, and it is not limited only to those deemed literary.

School, public education in general, has become focused on assessing students in standardized fashions, without addressing the actual knowledge and learning. Even in regards to responses to literature, we focus on the right answer or interpretation, without analyzing what the student actually is taking away from the text. Engagement and motivation are the two most important elements to consider when creating space conducive to learning. When we shift the focus from the required content in schools to the interests and passions of students, education will truly change. Rosenblatt's aesthetic stance is the ideal act in reading that I have for my students; however, helping them to enter the reading this way has been the struggle. How can I expect a student to respond aesthetically when I was the one to assign the text? My opinion is changing to that of rather than content, teachers should be focusing on the critical thinking skills and interpretation strategies, in addition to supporting readers' needs in order to reach this aesthetic reading, and to do this, we need to relinquish our control, which may remain a constant challenge.

Herein lies the struggle. As an English educator for sixteen years, I have met other

teachers who are hesitant to change what has been done in the past. The adage – *If it's not broken, don't fix it* – has morphed to be – *Our students have changed, but let's keep doing the same thing anyway*. Whether it is fear of doing something different, or the fear of change in general, there are many teachers who refuse to evolve as educators, despite the fact that our students have evolved, leaving many behind.

Conclusion

A question still remains – What can teachers do to incorporate strategies into our classrooms that benefit our students? It is not an easy road, but teachers need to work to help preserve our autonomy in our classrooms. We ourselves need to become textual producers and action researchers who investigate *with* students, allowing for multiple outcomes associated with innovative classroom practices. We cannot be passive observers, following the crowd of what has been done in the past. We need to step out of our comfort zones, and find the passions of our students. What do their passions bring to the classroom? What popular texts are surrounding our students? Learning is social, and what is more social than the culture that surrounds us all? If a teacher is unfamiliar with a popular text with which students are obsessed, opening up the discussion in class allows for wonderful opportunities for relationships between both to evolve.

Appendices

Appendix A, “As Soon as I Can” by wouldratherbeaunicorn

Appendix B, “Cookie Crumbs” by VictoriaAntoine

Appendix C, “Exposed Memories” by Leprechaun’s Fairy

Appendix D, “Fate is a Fickle Thing” by Ellana-san

Appendix E “Hide and Seek” by sponsormusings

Appendix F, “In the Spring” by Writingwife83

Appendix G, “In the Wee Small Hours” by ct522

Appendix H, “Like a River Runs” by bleachers

Appendix I, “Meeting in the Middle” by cutemara

Appendix J, “Sharing in Thirteen” by Ellana-san

Appendix K, “Sparking Frost” by Miss Ami-chan

Appendix L, “Stuck in a Moment” by sponsormusings

Appendix M, “Such Great Heights” by bleachers

Appendix N, “This Friday Night” by sponsormusings

Appendix O, “Valentine’s Day Angst” by MaryAnn1819

Appendix A, "As Soon as I Can"

As Soon As I Can by wouldratherbeaunicorn reviews

"Hello?" Peeta answered the phone. He had calmed himself down after the goodbye, and was now sitting in the den, drinking orange juice. "Peeta? I'm calling to say goodbye."

Rated: T - English - Romance/Tragedy - Chapters: 1 - Words: 1,026 - Reviews: 9 - Favs: 5 - Follows: 3 - Published: Jun 23 - Katniss E., Peeta M. - Complete

"Peeta, it won't be for long. I'll come home as soon as I can." The smaller one put her arms around his neck.

"I still don't want you to leave," he murmured, embracing her and squeezing her tightly before handing her the green backpack.

Katniss had to leave for some work thing. She was going to be collecting plants for observation. Peeta was wary.

"Please, don't worry," she whispered, letting go so she could look him in the eyes.

"You telling me not to worry is going to make me worry more." She smiled, but stood on tiptoes to give him a quick peck. He took the opportunity to grab her again. She giggled.

"I love you, Katniss. So much." She inhaled one more time.

"I love you too, Peeta." She hadn't said it before. Peeta knew she did, but that was her first time actually saying it. He wiped his eyes and let her go.

"Okay. Have fun. Call me when you land." She nodded, and wiped her own eyes.

"You know I will." She waved one last time before disappearing into the gate.

1 Hour 47 Minutes Later

"Hello?" Peeta answered the phone. He had calmed himself down after the goodbye, and was now sitting in the den, drinking orange juice.

"Peeta? I'm calling to say goodbye." Katniss' voice filled the small room, and Peeta jumped. She shouldn't be calling him, her plane just left the airport forty minutes ago.

"Katniss?"

"Peeta." Her voice was small and weak. She was panting. "Peeta you need to listen to me." He froze, and his eyes blinked slowly.

"What happened?"

"Peeta, the plane crashed. I'm not going to make it." He dropped the glass. Everything was in slow motion. He broke down.

"What – How -?"

"I don't know. The plane just spiraled. But, Peeta, I'm not going to make it."

"Yes you will. Katniss, don't say that. People will come for you. You'll be okay, and we'll grow old together, and we'll have a family. Three kids, remember Katniss?"

He was crying. So was she.

"I know. I'm sorry, Peeta."

"No! Don't say sorry. You are going to be okay. You can't d-" he couldn't say it. As long as he didn't say it, it wouldn't be true.

"Peeta. Listen to me. I'm going to die. You need to listen, okay?" She was still crying. So was he, but he stayed quiet so he could talk.

"Peeta, I need you to tell Prim that I love her, and that she was the best little sister ever." He grabbed his iPad and opened it up to record what she was saying, and almost threw it across the room when he saw his lock screen. It, of course, was Katniss.

"Say it again, Kat." She repeated it, and he told her to continue.

"Tell my mom that I forgive her. And that I love her. I love her so much."

His continual silence let her continue on with everyone in her life. By the time she got to Peeta, her breathing was more forceful.

"Peeta, I love you so much. So much. And I want you to go on with your life. Without me."

"No. There is no life without you," he whimpered. He could tell Katniss was crying again.

"Peeta. Yes there is. I love you so much, but you need to continue. Become an artist. Go to Mexico. Peeta. I need you to know that you are the best thing that ever happened to me. You were my future."

"And you were mine." He could hear her crying.

"Peeta, it hurts." This killed him. This broke his heart. He couldn't stand seeing her in pain, but knowing that she was suffering when she died, that made him want to die too. A long, painful death, anything to switch places with Katniss, or be there along with her.

"I'm sorry, Katniss. I'm sorry. I'm so so sorry."

"Peeta, one more thing."

"Anything."

"Will you tell me about our kids? What do you see? For the future?" "Of course."

"Remember, I love you Peeta."

"I love you, too." He swallowed, and started talking.

"I see a little girl, with dark hair, and blue eyes, dancing..."

Peeta sat at the cemetery longer than everyone else. It'd been his third time there that week. Finnick Odair had been first. He left his wife, his four-year-old son, and a two-month-old baby girl at home. Johanna Mason had been next, with only her brother, Blight, to grieve her. Peeta had gone, but he didn't really know her.

And now Katniss. Half the town had shown up, remembering the young girl. When talking to her family, Peeta included, the paramedic had said that she had survived longer than she should've, about an hour. Her phone was near her, and Peeta was still talking. She had a smile on her lips.

Peeta had then run. To where, he didn't know. He just knew he had to run. So he did. He ended up making it to the next town before he finally stopped.

He went back home and cried in his pillow until sleep came. With nightmares. So he cried some more. Haymitch, Katniss and Peeta's neighbor, tried to get him to eat, to no avail. Peeta didn't care anymore. He just wanted to be with Katniss.

The worst part was when he woke up one morning and expected her to be there, for this all to be one big dream. That was two days before the funeral. Four days after Katniss had died.

He finally started to walk home, but not before going to the Everdeen house and dropping off a small velvet box by the doorstep. It was for when she got back. He also left the iPad. He took a different way home. And he wasn't paying attention when a car came out of nowhere and hit him.

Or maybe he was.

Appendix B, "Cookie Crumbs"

Cookie Crumbs by VictoriaAntoine reviews

A girl in the Capitol watches the Hunger Games with her mother.

Rated: T - English - Drama - Chapters: 1 - Words: 1,381 - Reviews: 8 - Favs: 4 - Follows: 1 - Published: Feb 26 - Complete

"Mommy," the little girl chirped. "Mommy."

A woman swiveled in her silken chair, not looking up from her shiny red nails, which she was stroking lovingly.

"Yes, dear." She flicked her hand at a pale statue standing in the arched doorway, which came to life long enough to fill her crystal glass with a green liquid.

"Mommy, are those people for real? Or is this just a movie?"

No response. Nails clicking against nails.

"Mommy, are those people dying? Like..."

The woman looked at the child sitting in front of the television.

"Like, for real?"

The woman took a drink of the green liquid. Her silky chair hissed as she shifted her position.

"Yes, of course, dear. Haven't you been listening in school?"

This was a threat against the small one's intelligence. Of course she had been listening in school.

"Yes, Mommy. It's because of the Un-rising."

"Up-rising. Yes, dear." Nails clicking against crystal.

The television, which had been showing silent footage of a sick tribute hunched by a dying fire, spoke up.

"What's this?"

A face emerged from behind the stunted Joshua trees which hid the miserable tribute from the sandstorms that scourged the landscape. The commentator lowered his voice.

"Unknown to Cedar, she has company. Will this turn into an alliance, or..."

Cedar did not cry out. The thick branch to her head knocked her out at once, and she crumbled over, half-falling into the sizzling coals. The attacking tribute continued to batter her with the club. The commentator's words dyed away, then turned into a chuckle.

"Or not. You know, folks, it's just that skill—that decisive ability to turn anything into a weapon—which has bought Streak so much sponsor approval."

The little girl pushed herself up with her hands and scooted back from the television. From her new vantage point, she wrapped her arms around her knees.

"Servant," said the woman in the silk chair. "Fetch me a blanket." The statue dipped its head and disappeared through the doorway.

"...had similar plans," the television continued. "And although Streak certainly knows he wasn't the only tribute to see that fire, he doesn't seem to suspect how close the others have come. It won't be long before he gets a chance to prove his worth to those sponsors." The commentator paused ominously. "But first, these messages. Stay tuned." The Capitol

seal exploded onto the screen, and then faded as a dazzlingly colorful woman appeared and, accompanied by equally flamboyant music, described the wonders of her new long-lasting Flink-Flash Skin Dye.

"Mommy, may I get a snack?" The woman's eyes were closed. Her eyeshadow glittered like diamonds, and her curved red nails rested against the blanket on her lap.

"Mmmhmm." This meant yes. The little girl pulled herself up from the floor and walked through the arched doorway to a small, cushiony-pink room. She addressed the servant in the corner.

"Jebs," she piped carelessly. "Jebs, can I have some cookies?" The servant bowed his head and disappeared. The little girl looked at the pink wall, which was printed with butterflies. In the center of the wall was a photograph of her family—father and mother, herself, and her two brothers. The picture sat in a frame of gold with a pearl at each corner. She stared, her little mind transfixed with a speck of dirt on the upper-left pearl, until Jebs reappeared holding a plate. He bent down silently and allowed her to take a fistful of cookies. Before she had removed them from the plate, she hesitated and looked up at Jebs. He remained stoic.

"Jebs." It was barely more than a whisper. The servant glanced at her, a nervous look in his eyes. "Jebs, are you from the Capitol? Or from one of the districts?" Jebs shook his head and held the plate closer to her. But she stamped her foot, just a little. "Jebs, I want to know." He glanced toward the doorway. The woman was watching the television, oblivious to their words. A commentator with purple hair twisted into a single spike was chattering bouncily about a temporary sale on sponsor gifts. Jebs looked back at the little girl. He held up his gloved hand, pushed it forward twice, and then held up a single finger. The little girl cocked her head.

"Eleven? You're from District Eleven." The servant nodded slightly. The girl's hand removed the slightly crumbled cookies from the platter, and the servant stood up. The girl thought for a moment, then stood on her tiptoes. "Jebs," she whispered. "Jebs, if that was your home...why didn't you stay there?" Jebs' eyes slowly turned red and wet. He struggled with a sound, something between sobbing and coughing. With a quick bow, he turned away.

Panem's Anthem blared loudly from the adjacent room.

"Come along, dear" droned the woman. "The Games are starting." The little girl walked slowly toward the television. Jebs had not turned around fast enough. She did not let her mother see her face as she slipped past her and sat on the floor in front of the television. But when she tried to stuff one of the cookies in her mouth, she let out a little sob that spewed crumbs on her lap.

"Don't make a mess. What's the matter, dear?" The woman in the silk chair did not avert her gaze from the television. The screen showed a pack of allies moving through the

nighttime silence toward Streak, who was arranging his supplies in the ashy sand near the dead fire.

"Mommy—Mommy..."

One tribute made a few motions to another, who nodded and pulled out a knife with a hooked tip.

"Mommy," she sniffled, "I don't want to watch right now. May I go to my room?" The woman sat up straighter in her silk chair, which hissed back at her. "Why, dear! Certainly not. You know the president likes us all to watch." The girl scooted herself and turned toward her mother. There were tears on her face.

"Mommy, did Jebb have a mommy and daddy?" Her mother's eyes widened, but she smiled tightly. "Why, dear," she said. "You're not to talk to the servants, or about them. What's gotten into you? Now hush. Look, it's getting exciting." The girl looked back at the screen.

Streak heard a noise and was standing with his back to the coals, clutching his tree branch and looking around him. The little girl held her breath, quivering.

"Folks," murmured the commentator, "the bets are coming in like mad on this one. If you've picked the winner of this fight, be sure and send yours in." The woman's nails clicked as she picked up a shiny black square on her armrest and began typing rapidly.

Streak whipped around, facing an invisible threat. The girl's body was tense. Fwwwrrrrrr...the hooked knife whizzed out of the darkness and buried itself into Streak, just below his throat. A strange squealing sound seeped out of his mouth, and he faintly grasped at the knife, stumbling to his knees.

The girl's mother sighed. "I knew I shouldn't make decisions at the last minute. I just got so excited. Anyway. I only bet thirty." She set her device aside with another little sigh. When she looked back toward the television, the little girl was facing her, crying. "Why, dear!" she exclaimed. "You musn't get so upset." The little girl stood up, her back to the television.

"Mommy, I don't want to watch anymore!" she declared with a stamp of her foot.

"Now, now. Calm yourself down." The woman strained her neck to see past the little girl. The allied tributes were going through Streak's supplies. "Move, dear. I want to see." But the girl stood firm, tears running down her face. The woman pushed her blanket off her lap but did not stand up.

"Really! Enough already! They're only Games." The girl stared for another moment, then walked away past her mother. She marched through the doorway into the cushiony-pink room.

"Effie!" called the woman. "Effie, come back here! You're supposed to watch!" Effie kept walking, her chin quivering and her lips pursed stubbornly. But when she threw her handful of cookie crumbs into the waste bin, she sat down on the floor and burst into tears.

Appendix C, "Exposed Memories"Exposed Memories by Leprechaun's Fairy reviews

After Peeta is Hijacked Plutarch comes up with a way to get him back to normal. They just need to remind Peeta of things the Capitol didn't know about and couldn't use against him. Katniss has the perfect memory but does she have the courage to share it?

Rated: T - English - Romance - Chapters: 4 - Words: 4,738 - Reviews: 37 - Favs: 31 - Follows: 60 - Updated: Jul 10 - Published: May 28 - Katniss E., Peeta M. - Complete

Chapter 1

"...any memories you can think of that the Capitol wouldn't have seen or heard about. Nothing they could have manipulated for him," Plutarch explained. "Does anyone really think this could help?" Haymitch drawled. "The boy didn't just hit his head and lose his memories. He has them, they're just fu-"

"That's enough Mr. Abernathy," President Coin interrupted. "But he did start with a valid question Plutarch. Is there any chance this will help restore Peeta Mellark? Or is this yet another waste of our time and energy?"

The complete lack of any emotion but disdain in the president's voice broke Katniss from her stupor. "Of course Peeta is worth it. He's a victim, not a traitor. And he deserves our help."

"The girl's got a point," Plutarch agreed. "Having the Mockingjay working with us has increased our support significantly. If we get Peeta back to his old self, have him tell the people what Snow did to him, and then stand with her holding hands like they did during their tribute parades? We'll have Capitol citizens painting Mockingjay symbols on whatever they can get their faces."

"Fine," Coin said as she shuffled her papers around and stacked them into a neater pile. "You have forty-eight hours and then his care will be left up to the District Thirteen Healers."

And then she left, her advisers trailing behind her. Haymitch sighed and Katniss looked over at him. "Alright sweetheart. Let's gather the team."

Twenty minutes later Katniss found herself in a room with her mother and sister, Gale, Haymitch, Effie, Beetee, Finnick, and Johanna. And Peeta himself was just on the other side of a two way mirror, his wrists handcuffed to the table he was seated at.

"Let's brainstorm ideas. Memories we can jolt Peeta with."

Haymitch was standing at the front of the room, ready to play with the technology he'd used to brainstorm ideas for the Mockingjay propos.

"I sat with the Mellark boys a few times at lunch to help Peeta's brother Ryson with schoolwork," Prim offered. "I never talked to Peeta much but we would always say hello."

"That's not anything life changing but it's a start," Haymitch said as he scribbled 'school lunches' on the board. "Anyone else?"

"Why are any of us Victors here?" Johanna spoke up. "We only know Peeta through the games so all of our interactions were televised. And for that matter Katniss doesn't need to be here either."

"I whispered something to him once and I doubt any of the microphones picked up on it," Finnick offered. "What...what did you say to him?" Katniss asked, wanting the conversation to steer away from her usefulness.

"I just told him that you didn't want any of my sugar cubes and told him that he had horrible luck. You know, since he'd finally got the girl and then he had to go into the games again."

Haymitch cleared his throat. "Okay, let's not remind the boy of things that might make him angry or suicidal."

Katniss's mother finally made a suggestion. "I treated all the Mellark boys for coughs, colds and burns as they were growing up."

Haymitch didn't even bother to write that down, he just immediately turned to Boggs who had been told to stay with the group and keep an eye on the patient. "Go ahead and take her in to see him. So far she's our best chance."

Mrs. Everdeen shot her daughter a hopeful look and left the room only to appear on the other side of the glass a minute later. Confusion and anger warred on Peeta's face, still too thin and bruised, but he didn't yell or scream.

He flinched at the first mention of his brothers but otherwise didn't react to what Mrs. Everdeen was telling him.

Haymitch sighed and turned down the volume of the microphones in Peeta's room until they could barely hear Mrs. Everdeen's voice. "We need more. Something bigger and better. I know this is a long shot but is there anything you could tell him Katniss? Anything that didn't happen during the games or interviews or training sessions?"

"Is there any place that wasn't filmed during the Victory Tour?" Gale asked. "Or the Tribute Center?"

Effie pursed her lips and shook her head. "I didn't find out until later but there was no where safe on the train! Even the bathrooms were monitored! So you best believe I made sure there was none of that at the Tribute Center the second time around!"

Katniss turned her head so fast that pain flared up her neck but she barely noticed. "The bathrooms and bedrooms there weren't monitored? You're sure of it?"

Effie and Haymitch shared a look and Haymitch nodded. "As far as we know. Why?" Katniss didn't answer the question, she just stared at Effie. "Were...were any of Cinna's designs saved?"

Effie smiled at the mention. "I brought as much as I could with me. They only let me keep as much as I can store in the cell they call a bedroom but I have quite a bit."

"The Mockingjay dress?"

Everyone fell silent. "You mean the wedding dress Snow chose for you? I really don't think that's the best idea sweetheart," Haymitch pointed out.

Katniss shook her head, her gaze never leaving Effie's face. "Was it put back in its original box?"

"Cinna did it. Right before he went to see you off," Effie whispered. "And I have the box in my room."

Katniss's stomach roiled. "Bring it here. There's something I need to check."

As soon as Effie was out the door Haymitch sighed and took his seat. "Are you trying to drive Peeta even more insane or are you trying to get yourself killed? Both might happen if you show up in his room wearing the wedding dress that sparked a revolution!"

"This isn't about the dress Haymitch," Katniss said. And then she refused to say anything else until Effie walked in the door carrying a box she could barely hold.

"What's in there, woman? That thing is big enough to fit a small child or a litter of puppies!" Haymitch crowed.

Effie slid it onto the table in front of Katniss and then straightened her head wrap which had gone slightly askew. "You saw the dress in person so you knew how much space it would take up. You should have gone upstairs with me and carried it down, you big oaf."

Katniss didn't pay any attention to the banter of her former mentor and escort. Instead she gently slid the lid off the box and smiled when she saw the edge of the white silk garment bag peeking out from underneath the feathery black dress.

Then the door opened, her mom escorted back into the room by Boggs and Katniss caught his eye. "Is there somewhere I can change?" "She's not listening to me. Why isn't she listening to me?" Haymitch muttered.

"I don't know but now I'm really curious," Johanna said, her eyes narrowing when Katniss left, not with the dress, but with a small garment bag in her hand and Prim right beside her.

Chapter 2

Katniss stopped at the door to Peeta's room and gave her sister a shaky smile. "Maybe you should go back to our rooms. You don't need to hear or see —"

"Katniss," Prim interrupted. "I've seen you almost die, more than once. And between the games and Healer training I've also seen....you know, other things. So I'm not leaving. And I'll try and make sure Gale doesn't try to beat down the door when he figures it out."

"When did you grow up so fast?" Katniss murmured, reaching a hand out to toy with a wispy curl that had escaped Prim's braid. Prim smiled. "Probably when you did. Now go in there and get Peeta back," she instructed before returning to the rest of the group.

Once Prim was through the other door Boggs turned to Katniss. He didn't even comment on the fact that her jumpsuit was on backwards, the buttons now down the back instead of the front but he did check her emotional state. "Are you sure you're ready for this?"

Katniss nodded, not trusting herself to speak.

Boggs sighed. "I hope this works. We'll be watching you and won't be long if you need help." And with that he unlocked the door and let her inside.

Peeta tensed up the second he realized it was her. His hands tightened into fists, his eyes turned darker, his breathing increased and Katniss's heart broke.

She wanted to leave but she wanted her Peeta back even more so she took a few steps closer to the table. "I take it someone told you what we're trying to do today," she finally said even though she knew he'd been told long before her mother went in to speak with him.

"They did. And they also told me you wouldn't try to kill me. I'm still waiting to see if that's true."

His snarky tone, so not like Peeta, was enough to spark her flames. "You'd deserve an assassination attempt after what happened last time I was alone in a room with you."

They glared at one another until some of the air left Peeta and he slumped against the chair. "So are you also here to tell me stories of my family and the district you destroyed?"

Katniss pulled out the chair across from him and slid into it. "Do you have any memories of me that aren't horrible?"

"Sometimes...sometimes I think I do," Peeta said, looking anywhere but at her. "But then everything gets hazy and I can't figure out what's real and what's not."

They sat in silence for a few seconds and then Katniss inched her hand towards one of Peeta's bound ones. "Can I try and remind you?" she asked as she gently brushed her thumb against the side of his hand.

He froze and then his whole body shook, curses flying from his lips. Most were aimed at her and tears welled in her eyes. She was about to rush out of the room but then he settled down and his eyes cleared. "Yes, please Katniss. Try to stop this," he pleaded.

She leaned forward but didn't touch him again. "This last games, after my wedding dress turned into a mockingjay and you lied about me being pregnant to try and get the games cancelled —"

"You told me to do that," Peeta interrupted. "You were always manipulating me."

"During our first games, yes." Katniss could imagine the groans issuing from the next room over. She was supposed to be helping Peeta, not admitting that some of the things the Capitol had told him were true. Only wasn't the truth what was best for Peeta?

Apparently so because he actually smiled at her. It was a tense "I knew it" smile but it was a smile none the less. "So you admit that you're a manipulative liar."

Katniss didn't even flinch. "I did what I had to do to get us both out alive. But during the Victory Tour things changed." "Yeah, you manipulated me into agreeing to a sham marriage."

"Will you stop interrupting me and let me finish?" Katniss didn't even wait for an answer before she plowed on. "When we were on tour I realized how much I'd missed you. And then the Quarter Quell was announced and damn it Peeta, I asked Haymitch to volunteer if your name was picked first! I would have done anything to get you out alive and not just because I thought you deserved it or because I felt bad that Haymitch got sponsors for me and not you during the first time around."

Peeta leaned forward as far as his restraints allowed. Their noses were practically touching. "If those weren't the reasons then what was?" Katniss shook her head. "That's something I need to say to my Peeta. And you are not my Peeta."

"So what are you even doing here? And why is your jumpsuit on backwards?" he sneered. "I don't think anything like that has happened before so it can't possibly jog my memories."

"It's what's under the jumpsuit that matters!" Katniss blurted, her face flaming. Clearly that was not the response Peeta had been expecting and he just gaped at her.

Katniss looked the other way, afraid to see what emotions were displayed on his face. Would it be anger or amusement or perhaps a flicker of remembrance? But then she realized she was looking at Peeta's side of the two way mirror. She couldn't see anyone of course but she'd definitely have to ignore the fact that her family and friends were just on the other side of the glass and they could see and hear everything.

"Uh, Katniss?" Peeta finally asked, breaking her away from her worries and back into the present. "Were you going to take that thought farther or were you just hoping a casual mention of your...um, you know, would be enough to trigger some memories?"

Katniss smiled to herself. Even a Hijacked Peeta was uncomfortable talking openly about something as personal as undergarments. "Do you want to kill me right now?" she finally asked.

Peeta's eyes went wide. They sat in an uncomfortable silence for just over a minute before he finally responded. "I don't think so. Right now I'm more confused than anything else."

"What do you remember happening after the interviews the night before the Quarter Quell started?"

Chapter 3

Peeta bit his lip and Katniss knew he really had to think about his answer. "There was a camera in the hall of our floor in the Tribute Center. They showed me the footage of you pulling me into your room and told me that it was you manipulating me again. That you wanted to distract me and keep me awake all night so that I'd be easier to kill in the arena."

Katniss's heart pounded. "There were cameras in the hall but there weren't any in my room or bathroom? You didn't see any footage from those places?"

Peeta shook his head. "No. The rest of that night is a blur. I remember being exhausted the next morning so I can only assume you did keep me up all night."

They both blushed when the double entendre registered but Peeta didn't take back how he'd phrased it.

"I did pull you into my room but not for any of the reasons the Capitol may have suggested," Katniss told him. "I was afraid if you showered in your room that they'd lock us apart. I didn't want to be alone. And more than that, I didn't want to be without you. That could have been our last night together."

Peeta fidgeted in his chair and Katniss had to wonder if it was the handcuffs, the Hijacking, or the strangeness of her being so emotional that was making him uncomfortable.

She pushed away from the desk and talked as she walked over to the door, taking her chair with her. "Once we got to my room you, being the gentleman that you were, told me I could shower first," she said as she jammed the chair under the door handle so it would be harder to interrupt her conversation.

Peeta was gaping at her again when she turned to face him. He was trembling when she pulled out a small key and used it to uncuff his hands. "Before I went in to shower I asked you to unzip my dress."

In what Katniss knew was her stupidest move yet she turned her back to Peeta. Peeta, the man who had tried to strangle her just two weeks earlier. She could only imagine the chaos going down on the other side of the mirror.

"I...why...I could kill you! Why are you doing this?!"

Katniss looked over her shoulder. The muscles in Peeta's neck and shoulders were tensed and his hands clutched the arms of the chair. "I have to try and save you and returning your memories might do that."

"But-"

"Peeta, you are an artist. That means you are very visual. Maybe if you see..." she trailed off when he stood up.

Katniss looked straight ahead, not wanting to see the conflicted expressions on Peeta's face. Plus, she hadn't been confident enough to look at him on the night he'd unzipped her wedding dress and saw what was underneath.

His hands were unsteady when he reached for the buttons and she had a split second of panic at the thought that they might end up around her throat. Then his hands brushed the top button and he gently pulled it through the buttonhole.

But after three buttons he drew back. "That would be enough for you to slip this off if it were really the dress. Since this isn't sparking any memories you should probably re-cuff me before I go crazy."

"Then undo however many buttons it takes for you to figure out why I'm having you do this," Katniss spat.

Peeta did as he was told but he wasn't very gentle about it. Katniss was half-expecting fabric to tear or buttons to pop off when he suddenly stopped again.

She looked back over her shoulder and saw that his face was white as a sheet and his eyes were wide. "This can't be right," he murmured. "I would have remembered..."

"What are you remembering? I'll tell you if it really happened," Katniss whispered.

Peeta reached out and ran his fingertips along the exposed skin of her back. And then he very nearly repeated exactly what he'd said the night of the interviews. "Sunset orange. Your...undergarments are sunset orange."

Taking her cue from Peeta, Katniss echoed her past self. "Cinna knew it was your favorite color. He thought it would only be appropriate if my bridal lingerie would be something you'd appreciate. And since I had to wear my wedding dress for the interviews..."

"So the garments are only orange because Cinna designed it that way. Not because you had a say in the matter."

Katniss shook her head. "Actually no. When they got me ready for the interview Cinna had two sets for me. Traditional white and this. I chose this." Peeta tensed and she second guessed herself. Was he recreating the moment like she'd been trying to do or was it just a coincidence? But then he undid the rest of her buttons and stepped away. "Well you better get in the shower or I won't get a chance to take mine."

Katniss took a deep breath and spun around so she could look him right in the eye. "They can probably lock the bathroom door and separate us that way. So you should probably just join me."

The smile, a look of wonderment and surprise, crossed his face. "I remember everything!" he murmured.

They stumbled towards one another, her arms around him and his around her and he whispered it all in her ear so nobody else would hear. And she nodded and cried into his shoulder because he remembered it all exactly like it had happened.

Chapter 4

Author's Note: I am so, so sorry about the delay! First I had a horrible cold and then there was the holiday weekend where I wasn't anywhere near my computer. But here it is, the last chapter for the story! And FYI, italics denote memories. I hope you enjoy!

Gale had rushed to his feet when Katniss dragged the chair to the door. No one else moved.

Then she'd pulled out the keys to Peeta's handcuffs. That got a response from everyone in the room.

Mrs. Everdeen and Effie gasped.

Haymitch muttered something about needing "just one more damned drink."

Boggs had to restrain Gale when he'd made a break for the door.

Finnick and Johanna shared a smirk.

"It's going to be fine," Prim spoke over them all. She watched as Peeta unzipped her sister's dress and then they were wrapped up in each other, Peeta whispering so low that the sensors couldn't pick up a word. "We're all going to be fine."

Katniss smiled, tears falling from her eyes as Peeta whispered in ear and they relived their last night before the 75th Hunger Games.

Peeta was so shocked at her request to join her in the shower that all he could do was gape. She had to reach out and pull him to the bathroom. Neither of them spoke as they undressed and slipped into the shower stall.

Katniss smiled as the hot water rained down on their bodies. When she'd invited him to join her she'd been so nervous but clearly he was too. He hadn't even looked at her and yet the back of his neck and ears were flushed red.

But she'd already made up her mind about how she wanted to spend what might be their last night together and even though she couldn't say the words she could damn well show him.

So, Peeta's back turned towards her, she soaped up a washcloth and gently ran it across his shoulder blades. He jumped at the contact. "Katniss, what are you doing?" Peeta asked, his voice strangled.

"Helping you wash up. Now hush." She brought the cloth down his arms, over his buttocks and down both legs, not treating the prosthetic any different since she knew it was made to handle all elements.

"Now I need to do the front," she whispered. "You really, really don't ha"

"But I want to." And Katniss turned him to face her. He looked above her head instead of at her body but, unlike during their first games when she'd tried her hardest not to look, she let her eyes wander over every inch of him.

Then she started soaping up his shoulders, lingering over his chest and abs then avoiding the one place she suddenly realized she was very curious about. He sighed when she dropped the cloth without touching him there and she knew he was disappointed but hadn't expected her to touch him there.

"Are you going to return the favor?" she whispered.

Peeta finally looked her right in the eye in surprise and then his gaze fell lower and lower as though he couldn't help himself once he started. "What...what is it you want me to do?" he stammered, his eyes glued to her bare breasts.

Katniss didn't say a word, she just soaped up another washcloth and put it in Peeta's hand. Then she guided that hand to her shoulder, barely an inch away from where he couldn't stop staring. When she dropped her hand he continued from there, washing her just as she had him. There was tenderness but he didn't linger over her intimate areas.

They helped each other wash their hair and it might not have led to anything more. Then Peeta slipped right when they went to step out of the shower stall.

Katniss automatically reached out to help steady him and next thing she knew her back was pressed against the wall of the shower and Peeta was somehow pressed against her front.

They both froze at the contact and Peeta looked at her with wide eyes. "I'm sorry," he whispered and stepped away. He didn't say anything else as he carefully stepped out of the stall, pulled the towel off the rack, and wrapped it around his waist.

Katniss couldn't help but blush and smile as she reached for her own towel. She knew why Peeta had apologized and it hadn't been because he'd tripped and taken her with him. It had been the fact that he'd very much enjoyed the shower, so much so that she'd felt it against her belly when they'd hit the wall.

She quickly dried off and followed him into her room, her mind racing. Suddenly she wasn't so much nervous as she was electrified.

"Peeta?" she murmured, interrupting him just as he was about to pull on a pair of sleep pants he'd taken out of her dresser. There'd been a few of her outfits in Peeta's room and vice versa since day one.

Once Peeta turned to look at her Katniss dropped her towel and stalked towards him. She slid her arms around his neck and went to pull him into a kiss, huffing in frustration when he turned his head. "Don't you want me?"

"Not like this. Not if it's just because you know we won't both make it out of this alive," Peeta said. His voice was stern even as his hands gently traced patterns on the bare skin of her back.

Katniss moved a hand up to trace his jaw line, then applied enough pressure to guide his eyes to meet hers. This was the part that had been making her anxious ever since she'd first thought of it. The part where she'd have to use her words.

"Peeta, I don't have much experience with love except for how much it hurts. Watching my mom break down after my dad...knowing I'd rather die a million times over than see my sister in the arena. But Prim and you...you've also shown me that love can make you strong and I don't want to be afraid of it."

"Katniss, what are you saying?"

"I can't tell you that I love you," Katniss admitted. "But if we had time I know I could and I would but we don't. I just know that tonight I want to be with you."

Peeta searched her eyes and must have found whatever he'd been looking for because he dropped his head and captured her lips in a kiss.

That one kiss led to many kisses and caresses and afterwards Katniss stayed curled up in his arms awash in regret. Not at what they'd just done, she'd never regret that, but regret that she hadn't realized how important Peeta was until it was too late.

Peeta pulled away just enough to look at her face, searching just as he had that night. "How can you trust me to hold you like this when I forgot...and then I tried to choke you to death?"

Katniss gulped, staring into the blue eyes she remembered and not the cloudy haunted ones he'd been returned to her with. And she finally spoke the words she never thought she'd get to say.

And yes they were still in the middle of a war. They were still both broken (she was not naïve enough to think either one of them would ever be completely healed, not after what they'd been through) but she had hope.

"I love you. Always."

Appendix D, "Fate is a Fickle Thing"

Fate Is A Fickle Thing by Ellana-san reviews

When there is only one seat left on a plane what do you do? Argue with the handsome stranger who wants it, of course.

Rated: T - English - Romance/Humor - Chapters: 1 - Words: 4,510 - Reviews: 23 - Favs: 17 - Follows: 7 - Published: Jul 30 - [Effie T., Haymitch A.] [Katniss E., Peeta M.] - Complete

"What do you mean I can't take that plane?" Effie scowled, her usual poise and good education threatening to fail her faced with the dense woman behind the counter. "I booked my flight two weeks ago."

"I'm sorry, Ma'am." the woman repeated for the fifth time. "That plane is cancelled. There is a plane leaving for Richmond tomorrow morning."

"I need to be in Virginia tomorrow morning hence why I booked a flight tonight." she hissed, ignoring the annoyed grumbling coming from behind her. "I'm sorry, Ma'am." the woman repeated.

"You being sorry won't help me get to Virginia in time for..."

She was rudely interrupted by the man behind her.

"Listen, lady, she says she can't do anything. What do you think she's going to do? Have a special plane set up just for you?" the guy snapped. She turned around and glared. He had grey eyes, dirty blond hair that was much too long and unstyled, stubble that covered his chin and jaw, clothes that clearly had seen better days and his breath stank of whiskey...

"Did anyone ask for your opinion?" she huffed. "Don't you know it's rude to intrude in other people's conversation?"

"Don't you know it's rude to keep everyone waiting because you're throwing a bitch fit like a spoiled little brat?" he deadpanned.

He might have had a point but she wasn't ready to concede defeat all the more so when everyone in a two foot radius was looking curiously at the scene they were causing.

The woman behind the counter cleared her throat. "Ma'am, do you want to book a ticket? There is only one seat left..." "What?" the guy exclaimed, his anger quickly switching target. "No way. I need that ticket. I need to be in Virginia tomorrow."

"Oh, now who is throwing a fit?" Effie mocked, batting her eyelashes at him with delight. She turned back to the attendant. "I assume the plane lands in Richmond but I'm actually going a little further away. In a charming little town, they called it the Seam, you may have heard of it... Anyway, at what time is the plane supposed to land?"

"You're going to the Seam too?" The man made a face. "You're not taking that plane, sweetheart. That seat is mine."

"Excuse me, I was there before you." she argued. "And I still don't know the details of the flights. You are not an efficient employee."

Said employee looked ready to tear her hair off her head. "I suggest you two step aside and decide who gets the ticket. Next!"

"Absolutely not!" Effie screamed at the same time the guy shouted. "I need that ticket!"

But the next person in line had already stepped up and they were roughly pushed aside.

"How rude!" she scoffed, almost toppling over in her high heels. "Well, there is nothing to decide in my opinion. I was there first. I get the ticket."

"You are a real bitch, aren't you?" he sneered. "Look, my kid is waiting for me to show up tomorrow morning, I'm going to show up tomorrow morning, so whatever business trip you're on will have to wait."

"I am not on any business trip, I am actually going to visit family and I refuse to disappoint my nephew." she retorted. "There is a very important event I need to attend and..."

"I'm not asking for your life story, sweetheart." he cut her off.

"I am not your sweetheart !" she snapped.

"Yeah, that's for sure!" he taunted. "I bet you haven't been anyone's sweetheart in a long time, it would explain the giant stick in your ass."

"How vulgar." she declared before turning back to the woman behind the counter, swiftly stepping in before her next customer could and ignoring the resulting protest. "Excuse me, I will take the ticket."

"No, she won't." the man said.

"The gentleman who just left bought the last ticket." the woman declared with a professional smile that barely hid the hint of glee at annoying them.

For a second, Effie stared and then she saw red. "Is this a joke?"

"You're kidding me?!" the stranger exclaimed at the same time.

"There are no more planes leaving for Virginia until early afternoon tomorrow." the woman said, after checking her computer. "I suggest you rent a car.

It's only a two hours drive to Richmond and a four hours drive to the Seam. I would hurry too because rental cars are usually disappearing like flies at this time of night."

Effie checked her watch : it was midnight, a four hours drive wasn't appealing but neither was disappointing her nephew. With a sigh, she resigned herself to traveling the slow way. The guy was already gone and she hurried in the direction of the rental agency, afraid that since it was obviously not her lucky day, there would be only one car left and the horrid man would beat her to it.

Her fears were unfounded. There were several cars waiting there and a very helpful boy ready to assist her. She spotted her scruffy stranger at the other end of the store, clearly he was having less luck than her.

"I can't rent you a car, sir, you're drunk." the other sales assistant said. "I'm not drunk. I had two glasses." the guy argued.

The young man who took care of her apologized for the scene and handed her papers to sign. By the time she had filled everything and she was handed keys, the guy had disappeared but she overheard him on the phone as she was walking to her car.

"No. Listen, kid, I tried, there's no flight before noon." He paused long enough to draw a breath and run a shaky hand in his hair. "I tried, I can't drive." Another pause and, this time, he winced. "No, I'm not drunk. I just had two drinks. You know I hate flying. Come on, sweetheart, don't be like that. Yeah, I know your mom isn't coming. Yeah, I... Look, I know I promised, I didn't want to miss your engagement either, I... Hello? Girl?" He looked at his phone in dismay and kicked a nearby car in anger. That was when he realized she was standing there, looking. "What do you want?"

The man was horrid, drunk and he clearly had a temper. Truly, she ought to have left him where he stood.

She tilted her head and pursed her lips, reminding herself of how many times her manners had brought her nothing but trouble.

"You can travel with me." she sighed, already regretting it. "You shouldn't miss your daughter's engagement. I'm sorry, I overheard."

He hesitated for a moment and then a look of pure relief washed on his face.

"I could kiss you." he breathed out, not wasting a second in flinging his luggage on the back seat of the car. In case she changed her mind, she supposed.

"A thank you would be more than sufficient." She fought to keep a grin off her lips. "My name is Effie Trinket."

She outstretched a hand. He shook it briefly, with enough strength that her poor fingers almost got crushed in the process.

"Haymitch." he offered.

She lifted an eyebrow and settled behind the wheel, leaving him to sit in the passenger seat. "Haymitch without a last name?"

"Abernathy." He rolled his eyes. "You're a cop or something?"

It was less taunting than earlier and much more teasing so she decided not to throw a fuss.

"Did anyone ever tell you you are awfully ill-behaved?" she asked, because not throwing a fuss didn't mean she would forgive such a breach in manners.

"Did anyone ever tell you you're awfully uptight?" he retorted.

They weren't even out of the parking lot yet. It would be a long drive. Never mind the fact that it was late and she was tired. She had planned to sleep on the plane to be fresh and rested the next day.

"At what time is your daughter engagement supposed to start?" She was fishing for a safe subject and she figured men liked to talk about their daughters.

"It's a dinner thing but she wanted me there in the morning to meet the guy's family, without all the fuss, you know." he shrugged and then added as an afterthought. "She's not my daughter. She's my kid but not my daughter. It's kind of complicated."

"Oh, I understand perfectly." she hummed. "I'm very close to my nephew. He's engaged too, that's actually why I am going down to Virginia, to meet his bride. How fantastic? A wedding, can you imagine?"

"You're from the Seam?" he frowned, giving her a look - the very same kind of look everyone in Virginia always gave her : the look of loathing that people only reserved for richer people.

"Obviously not." she replied. "I am from Richmond."

"Yeah, thought so." he snorted. "You look like a rich Daddy girl."

"And you look like a homeless drunk." she hissed. "Do I judge you based on your looks? No, so I will thank you to grant me the same courtesy."

She was barely reaching the highway. This was going to be a nightmare.

"Too bad, I was also going to say you were hot for an uptight bitch." he smirked.

The smirk only widened when she sputtered in horror.

"You can't say things like that to a lady! It's improper!" she rebuked him. "Not to mention I could leave you by the side of the road and then what would you do?"

"Wait for the next hot lady to stop and take pity on me." he shrugged. "And probably get an arrow in my eye when I finally get my ass to the Seam. My girl's an archery champion, never misses her target."

There was so much pride in his voice her annoyance receded a little.

"So, you often take hitchhikers?" he asked. "'Cause I've gotta tell you, sweetheart, you don't look very strong and I'm twice your size. 'Doesn't sound real clever to invite me in."

"You are assuming again." she said. "Who says I am not skilled at hand to hand combat?"

"Are you?" he mocked.

"No." she granted. "But perhaps I have a gun in my purse."

"Sure, you do." he humored her.

The banter wasn't so terrible and it made for a nice distraction. She found herself grinning like a fool at some times and being irritated out of her mind at others – his ten minutes laugh when he heard she actually worked in the fashion field had vexed her greatly.

The first two hours of driving flashed by quickly enough. Time fled when you were bickering and she and Haymitch never seemed to run out of subjects to disagree upon.

The real problems started once they had reached Richmond and he assured her he knew a shortcut that would be quicker than the highway. He had grown up around there, she was tired and there were two hours left to drive... She didn't think anything of it when she followed his directions.

Until she found herself stirring the car on the same road for the third time in one hour.

"We are lost." she declared, pulling over and turning off the engine. She was sleepy, they hadn't seen another car in at least two hours, and she hoped the rental came with a map.

"No we're not." he grumbled. "I told you to take right at the crossroad." "I took right. I took right the three times we ended up there." she hissed.

He stared at her. His eyes were slightly bloodshot, either from lack of sleep or because of the tremors in his fingers he was trying to hide from her. He had taken a few mouthfuls from a flask when he had thought she wasn't looking. It didn't take a genius to understand he had an alcohol addiction problem.

"Then we're lost." he shrugged.

"Oh, for the love of..." She stopped herself in time. A lady didn't curse, after all.

She wriggled to reach her purse on the backseat – which accidentally made her press her chest against his arm and she tried very much not to mind how small the car seemed to be now that they weren't moving.

"Looking for your imaginary gun?" he joked. His voice was rougher as if he, too, had just realized just how close they were sitting. Spacious, the man from the rental agency had said, clearly they needed to think again. Or maybe Haymitch was just thinking she might truly have a gun and was really considering murdering him on a back road of Virginia. He looked paranoid enough.

"Perhaps." She gritted her teeth. "You certainly would have it coming." She finally found her phone in her cluttered bag. "I have no signal." Which meant no GPS either...

He checked his own phone and shook his head. A search of the glove box didn't reveal any map.

She chewed on her bottom lip nervously. "I suppose we can either drive at random until you recognize something or we can wait for a car to pass by so we can ask for directions."

"Sweetheart, it's pitch black and it's the middle of the night." He rolled his eyes. "I won't recognize shit and nobody is going to drive around here."

"And what do you propose we do then?" she hissed. She had learned early during the ride that protesting the pet name would only lead to him becoming more creative and calling her stupid things like darling or Princess. "It's your fault, we should have stayed on the highway."

"We wait for sunrise." he suggested. "We're only an hour away. We will be there for breakfast." He threw a dubious glance. "You could use a few hours of sleep anyway, you've been driving for three hours."

She had promised she would be in the Seam at first light. She was so eager to meet her nephew's fiancée... The dear boy would never voice his disappointment naturally but she would know. The idea of letting him down was crushing and she stepped out of the car, feeling the need for some fresh air .

She wasn't expecting Haymitch to step out too.

"What are you doing?" he frowned.

"I need to stretch my legs." She started walking. She wouldn't go far, she decided.

"On a back road at night? You've got a death wish?" he spat. "Come back here before you get yourself killed."

"And who is going to kill me, I wonder?" she retorted. "We're lost in the middle of nowhere thanks to you. I should never have offered you a ride. I should have left you stranded there! You are rude and vulgar and insufferable!"

"Why did you?" he snorted. "I didn't ask you anything."

"Because you looked sad and that made me sad and... Damn me and my stupid compassion." she sighed, and turned her back on him. She wandered closer to the middle of the road and found herself abruptly pulled back closer to the car. She struggled in fear, suddenly very aware that despite the three hours spent together he was very much a stranger.

"Stop." he growled, pushing her gently but firmly against the side of the car. "You don't just stand around in the middle of the road. You will get yourself killed."

It was dark but the moon was full and it was enough for her to glimpse the panicked glint in his eyes. His worry was genuine, she realized. "There is no one on this road, Haymitch." she pointed out. "We haven't seen anyone in ages."

"There's always no one right up until a drunkard comes and hit you with his car." he chuckled darkly.

There was clearly a story behind that statement but his voice was laced with so much pain she didn't dare ask for it.

It occurred to her they were standing way too close to each other for strangers, he was almost pinning her to the car, but she found she didn't mind so much. He smelt like whiskey, cheap soap and faint sweat. It was manly and her mouth watered as her body slowly reacted to his unexpected proximity.

The weird tension shifted to something acutely familiar. He took a hesitant step forward, obliterating the notion of space between them. She instinctively placed a hand on his chest although not quite pushing him away.

"You are rude and vulgar and insufferable." she repeated, in a hopeless attempt to remind herself that it wasn't a good idea. At all. "Got a thing for bad boys, sweetheart?" he mocked.

She closed her eyes and let her head fall back against the car. "Unfortunately yes." It wasn't just the bad boy vibe, though. He had been pushing all her buttons ever since they met. She couldn't resist a challenge and he was very much a challenge. A challenge with appealing grey eyes...

"Good thing I have a thing for difficult women then." he smirked, brushing his fingers against her jaw.

"I am not difficult." she denied. "I simply have high standards. I know what I want and I stop at nothing to get it."

And to prove just that, she grabbed the lapels of his coat and tugged. Their mouths crashed together, their noses bumped, his stubble scratched her skin, and there were far too many teeth involved but it was strangely perfect in its messiness. Before she understood what was happening, he had her pinned to the car, her legs were wrapped around his waist and she couldn't tell if they were kissing or fighting for control.

His hands were wandering under her clothes, kneading and stroking her flesh in turn, and she was tearing at his coat and shirt, trying to access his skin.

She had just managed to open his shirt and she was down to her bra when the flood of light took her by surprise, making her gasp in alarm. The car that drove past honked joyfully at them and she buried her face in his neck, mortified beyond words.

"You should have asked them for directions, sweetheart." he chuckled.

"Oh, would you stop!" she scowled, whacking his shoulder. "You are truly the most horrid man I have ever had the misfortune to meet! You..." The rest of her sentence was muffled by his mouth. Far from being entirely distracted, she fumbled around for the car door handle and managed to open the door to the backseat. Then she buried her fingers in his hair and tugged firmly enough that he stopped kissing her to look at her, obviously amused by her antics. "Inside the car. Now."

"Bossy." he commented.

She wasn't sure if it was a good thing or a bad thing but he was smirking when he tossed her on the backseat.

Afterwards, they remained there, lying as comfortably as they could in the cramped space. She felt like a ragdoll and couldn't be bothered to get dressed just yet so she settled with her head on his shoulder and the rest of her on his lap. She was probably crushing him but she couldn't bring herself to care. He had thrown his coat on her sometime after her third shiver.

"I'm too old for car sex." he stated after a while. "I'm hurting all over."

He seemed to have developed a strange fixation for her curly hair and kept tugging on strands only to watch them bounce back into place.

"I will move." she offered, very much not moving.

"It's okay." he shrugged "You can sleep a bit, if you want. I will wake you up when there's light."

"Are you sure?" she hummed. "It's been awhile since my last one night stand but I seem to remember in those situations men are not usually fond of cuddling."

"It's been awhile for me too." he admitted. "So fuck the usual protocol."

"Language." she chided him.

"You're serious?" he snorted. "I can't say fuck? I just licked your..."

Blissfully for her ears, she fell asleep without hearing the rest of his no doubt crude sentence. It felt as if she had just closed her eyes when he shook her awake.

"It's seven a.m." he told her. "I fell asleep."

The day was bright and Effie added another memory to her "walks of shame" list. She hurried to get dressed, taking care not to look his way. He was behaving along the same lines.

It was awkward, oh so painfully awkward...

"Oh, fuck." he growled and before she could ask him what he meant by that or rebuke him for his atrocious vocabulary, he grabbed her arm and pulled her to him. She fell into the kiss with an easiness that puzzled her. "Look." he said. "We had a great time and we're never going to see each other again so there's no point walking on eggshells, yeah?"

His eyes were even more striking in the light of day and she nodded eagerly, not looking forward to an hour ride spent in awkward silence.

There was certainly a tension in the car when they started driving again but it had little to do with either of them being ill-at-ease and more to do with the looks and smiles they kept sharing. They found their way to the Seam but halfway there Haymitch's hand ended up on her thigh, slowly making its way under her skirt and she pulled the car on the side of the road again. It was a good thing they were so deserted because there was no room for mistaking what they were doing when she straddled him.

She was almost disappointed when they finally reached the Seam.

"Where should I drop you off?" she asked. "Where does your not-daughter live?"

"You can leave me here. I will walk." he said. The town wasn't that big and she knew from past experience you could easily walk from one end to another if you had time to spare. She hated wasting time though.

"Are you sure?" she insisted as she pulled over. "It's no trouble at all..."

"It's fine, sweetheart." He waved her offer off. "Thank you for the ride. And... the rest."

His smirk was doing weird things to her belly. It was odd to think she would never see him again because... Well... Fair was fair: the sex had been great. On impulse, she leaned in and pressed a kiss against the corner of his mouth.

"I'm almost glad we missed the plane." she offered.

"Almost?" He lifted his eyebrows, a hand on his heart in mocked hurt.

Then he gave her a real kiss and she had to fight not to suggest they might have time for a third round assuming they could find a motel somewhere.

She forced herself not to look in the rear-view mirror once he was out of the car. She fished her phone from her purse, dialed Peeta and followed his directions to his new house. She didn't have to force herself to sound cheerful exactly but there was a small regret weighting on her nonetheless. Perhaps she should have asked Haymitch's number...

Peeta was waiting on his doorstep and waved at her as soon as he saw her. Forgetting everything about handsome alcoholic strangers and surreal one night stands, she parked the car and lost no time in hugging the boy to the point he had to crack a joke about her smothering him.

"I missed you so much!" she laughed, only then noticing the young woman who had stepped out of the house. She was beautiful. She had fire in her eyes. "Effie, meet Katniss." he said with a goofy smile.

Katniss didn't have a goofy smile, she sulked and brooded but she was also kind and obviously in love with her nephew. She simply wasn't the overly demonstrative sort and Effie had understood from her many phone calls with Peeta that her family situation wasn't ideal.

So when they were finally settled in the kitchen around a cup of tea, she tried not to judge too quickly even though her manners were less than stellar.

"Katniss' uncle was supposed to come today but he missed his flight." Peeta explained while the girl glared at the phone that hadn't stopped ringing ever since Effie had arrived. "We hoped we would be able to introduce you to Katniss' family before tonight's dinner. Oh, yes, I didn't tell you! We're having an engagement party tonight. Just close family and a few friends. Nothing grand. I just wanted you to meet everyone before the wedding."

She was privately having a silent mini panic attack at what she had packed and what would be suitable for an engagement party but smiled nonetheless.

"There were a lot of problems with planes yesterday." she answered tactfully, hoping to smooth ruffled feathers. "I'm sure your uncle will get another flight..."

"If he cares enough to show up." Katniss grumbled.

The phone finally stopped ringing but the young woman didn't stop glaring.

Of course, a few minutes later, the front door slammed open without any warning and a gruff voice boomed in the house.

"Can't any of you answer your fucking phones?"

Effie startled very badly.

"Don't worry, it's just Haymitch." Peeta told her, misunderstanding the source of her fright. She knew it was just Haymitch, she had recognized his voice but what on earth...

For the first time since Effie had met her, a real smile flashed on Katniss' face and she rushed to the hall.

"I thought I would need to send Johanna get your ass back here." she heard the girl say. There was a pause that she imagined meant they were hugging and then Katniss spoke again. "Come meet Peeta's aunt. She's like his mom so best behavior. I mean it. And she's posh so don't start making fun of her."

Effie wondered if Katniss was aware she could hear everything.

Peeta was smiling in obvious fondness.

She heard the footsteps coming closer and closer and she could only sit there and watch the upcoming train wreck unfold. Katniss dragged Haymitch in the kitchen by the wrist and declared proudly : "Effie, this is Haymitch."

He registered the name before his eyes fell on her.

The look of shock on his face would have been comical in another context.

She was sure her face was worth a laugh too.

Fate had a funny way to come back and kick you in the ass.

Appendix E, "Hide and Seek"Hide and Seek by sponsormusings reviews

To hide, to seek, to find. Some games can not only acknowledge what you've got now, but can also remind you of what you once had... A submission for Prompts in Panem, March/April 2015. Day 6.

Rated: T - English - Family/Romance - Chapters: 1 - Words: 1,791 - Reviews: 11 - Favs: 20 - Follows: 9 - Published: Apr 6 - Katniss E., Peeta M. - Complete

"I wonder, I wonder, what will I see? I think that Peeta is hiding from me!"

Biting his lip to fight back the laugh that bubbled up in his throat, Peeta wrapped his arms around his legs, tried to snuggle his way back even deeper to the faded quilts and threadbare sheets on the bottom shelf of the utility closet. It was his first time hiding in here, even though he'd thought it was a great place millions of times. And so far, his dad still hadn't found him, even after a whole five minutes.

Maybe, just maybe, he would finally win!

"Daddy daddy daddy daddy daddddddddddddy!" A blur of black hair and long limbs flew across the room, wrapped itself around his legs, and Peeta laughed, reaching down and drawing his 6 year old into his arms.

"Well, that's a greeting and a half, Hols," he greeted, planting a big kiss on her cheek, dropping his satchel on the kitchen counter. "What's going on?"

Holly - loud and rambunctious and more sociable than either of her parents had ever been at her age - tried to jump up and down in his arms. "Mommy said you'd play hide and seek with me and Ashy!"

"Asher and I," he corrected, tugging on the end of one of her plaits, the end tied off with a red ribbon - her favourite colour this week. "And did she now? Asher's a little young, don't you think?"

Holly nodded. "Uh-huh, but she did! She said if we was good, and I did my spelling and was quiet while Ashy had his nap that you would."

He glanced up as Katniss walked into the room, their eighteen month old toddling along on his plump legs behind her. She looked exhausted, he realised, her eyes tired and her shoulders slightly slumped.

"Hey," he greeted, lowered Holly back to the ground. He crossed to her, sought her lips with his in a tender kiss. "You okay?"

"Yeah," she smiled. "Just...Asher was in a mood today." They both glanced down to the toddler who'd plonked down on the kitchen floor, and was batting at the end of Peeta's boot. "He's alright now, but a few hours ago, I swear they would have been able to hear him on the other side of town."

Peeta sighed, drew her into a hug. "Sorry. You should have called me at the bakery."

"So you could have done what, worry?" Katniss shook her head. "It's okay. You're home now, that's what matters - and they're yours to deal with for the next half an hour while I have a bath."

Peeta screwed his nose up. "You can't talk about our children and make me think about you naked in the same sentence, Katniss." He leant in, rested his lips against her ear. "So unfair."

"You'll get your time," she grinned, pushing lightly on his chest, then stepping back. "Hide and seek time guys!" "YAYYYYYYYYY!"

His breaths felt like they were the noisiest thing ever - like the machines in the mines, or like when Mrs Waterson yelled at Mr Waterson at the flower store, because she was reallllly noisy.

(And she said bad words too).

But he was worried - if his breaths were that noisy his dad would hear him and then he'd find him and then the game would be over. And that would be the worst because it would mean his mom was all that closer to coming home.

He loved his dad way more than he loved his mom. But he wouldn't tell anyone that in case he got in trouble.

Peeta grinned to himself and hoped that at least Aaran got found first this time. Then he could shut up for once about being the best.

"Twenty!"

Peeta uncovered his eyes - not that he really needed to, there was no one around to see him do otherwise - and glanced around the empty living room. Asher sat on his lap, squirming and ready to move.

"Alright buddy, let's go find your sister, huh?" he said quietly, before raising his voice again. "I wonder, I wonder, what will I see? I think that Holly is hiding from me!"

He paused, waited to see if he could hear Holly giggle, or any movement that would give away which one of her usual hiding spots she was in. There weren't many she chose from - it was normally either under Asher's cot, behind the sofa, or in the pile of toys in the

corner of her room. But so far, the house was silent, save for the running of water upstairs.

Hitching Asher onto his hip, Peeta went through the lower floor of the house, searching behind doors, in cupboards, under sofas.

No luck.

He headed upstairs.

"Found you, Ethen! Now it's only Peeta to go!" "Awwww, Dad! This sucks!"

Inside his hiding place deep in the cupboard, excitement burst inside of Peeta - he'd now heard both his brothers be found, their grumbles echoing down the stairs back to the bakery. Which meant for the first time EVER, Peeta had won hide and seek. He couldn't WAIT to tell Delly at school tomorrow.

Hugging the knowledge of his win closely to him, he wondered if Katniss Everdeen ever played hide and seek with her daddy.

"Dadadadadadada!"

He had, officially, lost all element of surprise. There was no way, no way at all, that he could try and sneak up on Holly in her hiding spot. Asher, with his little voice constantly on the go as he patted Peeta's cheeks enthusiastically, was not the most inconspicuous of hunting partners.

"Shhhhh, buddy," he whispered. "We gotta be sneaky to find your sister." Which, at this stage, he was a little worried about doing. Because after 20 minutes, he still hadn't found her. He'd looked upstairs, downstairs - in every little nook and cranny he could think of. He'd even looked in his and Katniss' wardrobe, which Holly knew was off limits.

Still no luck.

Trudging down the hallway, he went back into their bedroom, knocked tentatively on the door to their ensuite.

"Yeah?"

Katniss' voice was soft, and as he opened the door and peered in, he was happy to see some of the tension had already shifted from her face. She was covered up to the neck in bubbles - she'd fought bubble baths for so long, until she'd actually had one - the lights drawn down low.

"Sorry," Peeta apologised. "I just wanted to check Holly hadn't snuck in here."

"Can't find her?" Katniss fought to hold back her laugh.

"I can't," he admitted. "I've taught her too well."

Katniss smiled, rested her head back against the tiles. "Well, she's not in here. I guess she's learnt her Daddy's tricks for camouflage, huh?"

"I guess so," Peeta replied, then paused. Maybe...maybe he had taught her too well. "Actually, I think I know where she might be, and I can't believe I didn't think of it before now." How could he have not thought of it? It was so obvious - she was her father's daughter, after all.

"Well, you'd better go find her," Katniss said. "Before she falls asleep again like she did the first time she hid under Asher's cot."

"I will," Peeta assured her, closing the door behind him. He switched Asher to the other hip, moved back out into the hallway to the rarely used second utility closet at the end. His steps felt oddly heavy, his throat filling with a lump, his eyes blinking back tears as he reached the door. And as he opened it, crouched down, and saw Holly curled up on the bottom shelf, surrounded by blankets and a wide grin on her face, he felt himself transported back to a time that felt like an age ago.

Holly burst out, wrapped her arms around both him and Asher. "I win, daddy! You took forever!"

He slid into bed later that night, his heart both full and empty at the same time. Full of love for his children, and his wife. Empty for what he'd lost, who he no longer had with him.

"Are you okay?" Katniss drew back the covers, and slipped in beside him, flicking off the bedside lamp as she did so. Moonlight from outside played across the sheets, danced across the walls.

Peeta nodded, drew her close so that her back was snug against him and he could bury his face in her hair. "Yeah. Just...playing with the kids reminded me of the times I played hide and seek with my dad for some reason. I know I've played it with Holly other times, but it had never really made me think of playing it myself as a kid before today."

"You only played hide and seek with your dad?"

"And Aaran and Ethen. Mom would go once a month to have afternoon tea with some other ladies in town, and they'd drink tea and probably bitch about the ones who hadn't shown up that day. But we'd always make the most of it - bake cookies that would be just for us, or use some of the baking paper to draw on. Sometimes, though, he'd close the bakery early and we'd play hide and seek. I only ever won once - and I won by hiding at the bottom of the utility closet."

Katniss' hand drew across his stomach, drawing patterns across the skin. "It's a good memory to have, huh?" "It is," he said quietly, closing his eyes. "A very good one."

"Ahhhh, kiddo, you've gotten good at this - I can't believe I had to forfeit!" His dad wrapped an arm around his shoulders, a big smile on his face. "Nice hiding spot, son."

"Thanks dad." Peeta said happily. He couldn't believe his dad had to forfeit either!

"Just remember these places when you're grown up and a dad yourself," Nolan Mellark winked. "That way you'll be able to find them real quick." Peeta grinned, wide and bright.

"Yeah, I will! My kids will have no chance against me!"

His dad laughed and ruffled his hair, then led him back downstairs to the bakery so they could open up again.

He liked winning, Peeta decided firmly, raising his hands above his head in victory when he saw his brothers. Maybe one day he'd win a game again.

Appendix F, "In the Spring"In The Spring by Writingwife83 reviews

Set in the Epilogue of Mockingjay. Katniss has made a big decision about her life and future with her husband Peeta. She knows it's what he's always wanted, but still she's haunted by fear. It's time to tell him the big news, and she can only hope that things will go just right. (my first Hunger Games fic.)

Rated: K+ - English - Romance/Drama - Chapters: 1 - Words: 1,746 - Reviews: 13 - Favs: 9 - Follows: 5 - Published: Jul 17 - [Katniss E., Peeta M.] - Complete

She paced back and forth behind her house. She wrung her hands and her brow stayed constantly furrowed. She knew what she needed to do, but it was so overwhelming. She'd faced everything that could paralyze you with fear, but somehow this was turning her into a complete wreck. It shouldn't, but it was.

In reality, Katniss knew why it was so hard. It was the fear of loss; the belief that she could never keep anything good and couldn't really be forever happy. She glanced briefly at the primrose bushes, quiet and unadorned now that it was autumn. She both loved and hated Peeta for making sure that they were always kept up and then replanted every couple of years.

She turned to look toward the kitchen window as she heard noises coming from the house. She could see the back of Peeta's head as he moved around and worked in the kitchen. He was baking, and she was suddenly distracted from her worries by her rabid desire for cheesy buns...she really hoped that's what he was making tonight.

Katniss strolled over and picked up the rabbits she'd caught. This couldn't be put this off any longer. She decided to head to the house and see him. She knew she'd feel better once she saw him anyway.

The smell of cheesy buns greeted her before his face did, and she instantly thankful. It was a little thing, but it made her smile for a moment...and that was enough to push her into a more positive mood. She couldn't bring herself to tell him this news without being able to smile.

"Hey," he called out without turning completely. "I think we should try to get Haymitch over here for some stew. There's plenty for three."

Katniss' lips twitched in a smile.

There's plenty for three.

"You wanna go get him?" Peeta asked casually as he reached in the oven. "I'd go myself and leave you with the stew, but last time I did that you managed to turn it into a pot of...I don't even know." He chuckled before turning around and looking at her.

She didn't look upset, but her silent staring jarred him.

"Katniss?" He tugged the oven mitt off and crossed the room immediately to meet her.
"Katniss, what's wrong?"

She took a deep breath. "I don't want to get Haymitch. I mean, not yet. I have to talk to you first. Maybe...we should sit down?"

This felt so strange. Katniss wasn't used to delivering big news...especially not happy news. She felt like it was a job for someone else. But in this case, there was nobody else. This was her news...their news.

Peeta was terrified of course. She looked so serious. He had learned to read her subtleties and knew her better than anyone, so although he could tell she wasn't truly upset...this was something big.

"You're kind of scaring me here," he said with a short laugh as they took the little walk over to their couch in the living room.

"Sorry," she said simply and squeezed his hand which had instantly grasped hers when he met her in the kitchen. She shook her head, wishing this to just be perfect...for him.
"Maybe I didn't do all of this the right way. I hope you'll still be glad. Um..."

Peeta peered deep into her downcast face. "Katniss, stop worrying. You can tell me anything. There's nothing we can't handle. If I know anything for sure, it's that."

Always the one with words, she thought affectionately. After all he lived through; he was still a bit of a natural motivational speaker.

She nodded, meeting his eyes. "So um, I didn't want to tell you right away. I thought...I just wanted to make sure and I didn't want you to be disappointed. And then I didn't want you to be worried about me all the time, so I waited a little more. And I was scared. Peeta, I was scared."

"Katniss?" he said in a whisper as he tried to figure out what she was saying.

She realized she was painting nothing but an ominous picture, and again worried that she was ruining this moment for the man she loved. And that was the last thing she wanted.

"But I'm also happy," she added quickly, and gave him a little smile. She felt her lip quiver a little as she did, and was surprised by the sudden emotion that washed over her.
"I did this for you, Peeta...but I think I'm glad that I did."

Her voice had cracked a little, so she was glad to stop talking. Instead, she took Peeta's strong and comforting hand and pressed it to her abdomen.

Suddenly, it was worth all the worry in the world as she saw his jaw drop and his gaze follow the path that their hands had taken. When his eyes shot back up to hers, they were already filled with tears.

"Katniss...really?" he asked in a broken whisper.

She shrugged. "I told you I wanted to be sure. And I am. I'm over two months."

Peeta let out a shaky laugh and dove into her, wrapping his arms around her and burying his face into her neck.

She felt the damp warmth as he both wept and pressed kisses to her neck. She thought of all the times she'd seen him cry...and there were precious few that were happy occasions. In the moment, despite her continued worry and anxiety, she wondered why she hadn't done this years ago. He was so happy.

Peeta pulled away and sniffed a little as he shook his head. "I can't believe you didn't tell me. And h-how did this happen?" His happiness was momentarily replaced with confusion.

Katniss smiled sheepishly as it was time for another confession. "I stopped taking them...those pills. I haven't taken any since the end of this past spring. I made this decision, Peeta, just me," she said firmly. "You always told me it was ok that I didn't want children and that it was my decision. Well I decided to change my mind. I wanted to do this...for us."

"Katniss, I've never needed anything but you." He leaned forward and kissed her. "But I always wanted to have children with you. I would have done without it, like I told you, if that's how you wanted it to stay. But now...I don't know how I could be any happier."

Katniss looked into his still emotional eyes. His eyes...would this child have them? Or maybe her eyes? She started to allow indulgent thoughts like that, now that he knew. He knew, so now it was truly real.

"Can I tell you a secret?" Peeta whispered as he pressed his forehead to hers.

"Hm?" she hummed.

"I'm scared too." He smiled warmly. "But most of what's worth anything in my life has involved a pretty fair amount of fear to go along with it."

She nodded, feeling her eyes filling a little again.

"I love you, Katniss," he whispered.

"I love you." The answer was barely spoken out loud as she didn't trust her voice anymore.

They crashed into each other's arms again and held tight, and as usual that was what calmed Katniss. Those arms never failed to come through in a moment of fear, sadness, or pain. Those emotions melted away, leaving only a feeling of safety.

Finally they pulled back and Katniss sighed. "I do love you, but I might kill you if I can't have some of those cheesy buns soon." She gave him a playful punch on the arm.

Peeta's eyes went wide and he jumped up excitedly. "Of course! No, really, you can have..." He gestured wildly. "As many cheesy buns as you can possibly imagine. I'll make them every day if I have to!"

She got up, smirking and shaking her head. "Ok, relax. See I knew you'd start trying to feed me."

"And we don't have to invite Haymitch tonight! Why don't you just have whatever you want and I can always bring him leftovers." Peeta had already made his way back toward the kitchen.

Katniss paused for a moment. "No. No, I'll go get him. I want to tell him too...if that's ok with you."

Peeta smiled softly. "Yeah, of course it's ok." He knew what she was thinking, that this man needed the sparks of joy and hope as much as or more so than they did. And the truth was that he was family. He had been for over fifteen years.

"Ok." Katniss grinned. "I'll go get him and then we'll eat."

She bounded off happily, but Peeta spoke again before she could open the door.

"Katniss! So, when would the baby be due?" he asked happily and looked like he was trying to do the mental calculations as well.

She couldn't help but feel warmed inside. Wasn't she getting what she had always known she needed? Just like Peeta...a promise of life and rebirth...the dandelion...

"In the spring," she answered with a smile.

Appendix G, "In the Wee Small Hours"

In the Wee Small Hours by ct522 reviews

Katniss and Peeta run into each other while taking a walk in the "wee small hours."

Either insomnia, or nightmares or both keep them from sleeping. Set between Games and the Quarter Quell. What happens when they run into each other? The song inspiration is Frank Sinatra's "In The Wee, Small Hours."

Rated: T - English - Romance/Drama - Chapters: 1 - Words: 3,159 - Reviews: 13 - Favs: 22 - Follows: 15 - Published: Mar 20 - Katniss E., Peeta M. - Complete

"In the Wee Small Hours"

Katniss and Peeta run into each other while taking a walk in the "wee small hours." Either insomnia, or nightmares or both keep them from sleeping. Set between Games/Quell. The song inspiration is Frank Sinatra's "In The Wee, Small Hours." What happens when they run into each other? Does their friendship start there?

In the Wee Small Hours

In the wee small hours of the morning

While the whole wide world is fast asleep

You lie awake and think about the girl

And never, ever think of counting sheep When your lonely heart has learned its lesson

You'd be hers if only she would call

In the wee small hours of the morning

That's the time you miss her most of all

-from In the Wee Small Hours by Frank Sinatra

Peeta tried not to trip as he walked along the darkened road from Victor's Village to the town center. It was well past midnight, though he couldn't say with certainty. He'd simply tumbled out of bed and shuffled into his shoes, glad to escape the latest round of nightmares, which had been vicious ever since the announcement of the Quarter Quell. He was sore, too, from the new exercise regimen he had imposed on himself, as well as Katniss and Haymitch. He had foolishly hoped that he would be too tired to dream during their "boot camp," as Haymitch had nicknamed it, but he should have known better .

Night cast a black shroud over the town, the lamps sporadically lit along the main thoroughfare, which was empty of travelers. Peeta didn't much mind it, though. It made him feel like the world was at peace and there was no one around except for him and the sing-song chirping of crickets drifting through the night air. He could momentarily forget that he would soon be forced to make the journey to the Capitol to participate in the Quarter Quell, either as tribute or mentor. It almost made him forget that Katniss would be entering the Arena again. The wee hours of the morning gave him a reprieve from the

constant strategizing that dominated his mind every moment of the day, fixated on only one objective - to get Katniss out of that Arena alive. Again.

This special kind of peace soothed him and though he longed for a restful sleep, the silence of the slumbering District would have to do because what Peeta really wanted, or needed, to sleep well was outside of his reach. He knew if Katniss came to his bed, even for a few hours, he would sleep like a baby and his nightmares would recede to the background, in deference to the comfort that he only found in her arms.

He imagined her firm back pressed against his stomach as he curled himself around her like a warm blanket. It comforted her also - he could feel it in the way her body settled down against him, her small sigh of relief that she probably didn't realize she was making when their skin made contact through the material of their pajamas. But it was he who could feel all the awful events of his life slide away before the warmth of her small body in his arms. He ached for her to cure his insomnia and something even more acute - the unbearable isolation of being a Victor all alone.

Trees rustled overhead as a breeze ran through them. The Reaping always took place in mid-summer and the Games themselves served as the gruesome highlight of the season, at least for the Capitol. So the weather was wonderfully balmy tonight. He unconsciously wandered towards the Great Lawn that separated Victor's Village from District 12's town center. It was a small hillock covered in grass and the occasional wild flower that created a physical division between the Victor's part of town and the rest of District 12. Peeta was careful with his footing, considering his prosthetic and the irregular stone that protruded from the otherwise smooth carpet of green.

As he reached the top of the slope, he was alerted by a sound far to his right. He squinted in the dim light, a smallish figure making her way in his direction. He thought he recognized the slender frame, worn leather jacket thrown over what appeared to be cotton pants and a t-shirt. The braid hanging over her shoulder was the final confirmation that it was Katniss climbing the hill.

She wore an expression of intense concentration, her scowl so deep, she appeared angry. The closer she came, the more he was sure she was wearing her pajamas and slippers, and the condition of her tousled hair indicated to him that she had just rolled out of bed. Peeta shifted his body towards her, the scraping of his shoes alerting her to his presence. She froze, a look of panic crossing her face and she instinctively crouched, as if preparing for a fight. The posture was so frighteningly like the one she had often assumed in the arena that he stepped forward, hands raised, to reassure her.

"It's me! Peeta!" he exclaimed hurriedly, watching with relief as she relaxed her stance and straightened from her semi-crouched position. Her grey eyes, still wide with fear, began to soften until they'd returned to their normal size.

"Peeta!" she gasped, fidgeting with her fingers. "I'm sorry. I thought, well, I thought..."

Peeta shook his head, walking towards her. "Don't worry. It happens to me too. I don't deal too well with surprises, either."

Katniss visibly relaxed, crossing the rest of the distance until she stood next to him. It was then that he saw the dark circles most prominently - how sunken her eyes looked in her head. They matched the bruise-colored half moons under his own eyes, and he had a sudden urge to drag her back home and tuck her into bed next to him. He'd get her to sleep - he knew just the way to stroke her hair to make her every defense and anxiety dissolve like hot wax in his hands.

He didn't say any of this, though. Instead, he faced out towards town from their vantage point on the hill, the sparse lights of the center twinkling like fireflies in the distance. Katniss stood close to him, quietly taking in the panorama with him. They didn't speak for a while. Finally, Katniss, in a voice still raspy from sleep, asked him, "Do you come out here a lot?"

Peeta shrugged. "Sometimes. When I want to think," he lied. They both knew they were out for the same reason.

She said nothing to this, continuing to stare out into the night. The wind picked up, carrying the fragrance, of Katniss or the woods, to his nose. His knees almost buckled from the intensity of the memory of waking to the smell of her surrounding him. If she had asked to lay down right there on the ground and sleep, he would have done it. She could have asked anything of him at that moment and he would have given it to her.

"Haymitch looked good today," she said suddenly, her voice only just quavering.

"He actually hit the side of the building, in the neighborhood of the target this time. I think his knife-throwing skills have taken a hit since he's taken up the bottle," Peeta quipped.

Katniss gave a small smile, nodding to herself. "Drinking that much can't be healthy."

"No, I'd think not," he replied. He glanced over at her and saw her shiver slightly.

Peeta battled with the thought that he could warm her up and make the cold go away. It would take nothing more than him reaching his arm out and pulling her close to him. The urge was so powerful, he had to check himself to be sure that he hadn't actually done it. However, when they had gotten back to 12, he had finally learned his lesson. It was something she simply didn't want from him. Instead of begging to let him warm her, which he might have even done if he thought he had a small chance of convincing her, he said simply, "You're cold. Let me walk you back home."

"It won't help!" she said suddenly, eyes gone wide and glassy. Peeta held her gaze, patiently waiting for her to say more, to ask – if only she would call on me.

But Katniss only shivered again, her eyes dropping to the ground and the opportunity blew away with the sudden biting wind. She simply turned around and moved in the direction of Victor's Village. They walked companionably down the now paved road, the statue of the winged woman greeting them at the entrance. Peeta walked Katniss to her door just as the sun was turning the horizon beyond trees the color of swirled purple, soon to be magenta, then pink. Peeta thought he might like to see it before trying his hand at baking this morning. Maybe tonight he'd be tired enough to finally fall into an undisturbed sleep.

Katniss paused at her threshold, looking over her shoulder at him, and he thought he caught a glimpse of something in her face – longing perhaps? But she dropped her gaze quickly and unlocked the door. Surely, it had been a figment of his desperate imagination. She pressed her way inside and turned fully to part from him.

"Thank you," she said quietly, lingering at the entrance. They stood in an awkward silence for several moments until Peeta couldn't stand it anymore. The whistle of the mines broke the trance that held them both in place. He could almost feel District 12 come to life like a giant, ancient creature roused from sleep, urging them on to their separate lives.

"Good night, Katniss," he said, stepping back down the stairs.

"Good night, Peeta," she responded as he walked back to his house across on the opposite side of the square. He felt her eyes on him, which made him feel even clumsier, as if she held him with an unseen rope that she refused to cut. When he entered the corridor of his home and turned again, he could just see her face fading from sight behind her own closing door, her grey eyes still locked on him until the handle clicked and her face finally disappeared in the shadows.

Appendix H, “Like a River Runs”Like a River Runs by bleachers reviews

Annie's broken the surface and he can't make out her silhouette through the mess of life past the foam. He stops for a second, lets his legs dangle in the open water, before he pushes himself even harder. Finnick never liked playing catch-up as a child, but for Annie Cresta, he'd do anything.

Rated: T - English - Angst/Romance - Chapters: 1 - Words: 3,343 - Reviews: 9 - Favs: 5 - Published: Jun 28 - [Finnick O., Annie C.] - Complete

attn | Notes and trigger warnings located at the bottom.

Finnick hasn't lived a carefree life since the day his mother died giving birth to him, but in all that time, he can't remember hating anything as much as he hates the clock on the wall to his left. There are no windows in this room and against Capitol protocol, the panoramic, wall-to-ceiling screen is switched off and Finnick can't find the controls. The room is barely furnished, especially by Capitol standards. The walls are an unflattering olive green and the sofa, undoubtedly one of District 7's finest, isn't an option. That leaves Finnick with his back on the cold, hard surface of the conference table staring at the standard-issue clock. The Gamemaker had left with a promise to be back within twenty minutes. In the last half-hour, Finnick has developed several nervous tics.

He hasn't had much by way of a formal education, but Finnick's read enough to know that the deafening, incessant ticking of the clock is amplified by the equally deafening silence. That, however, does not stop him from picking up one of the useless, heavy paperweights from the table and launching it at the unassuming clock. It's right on target, of course, because he's Finnick Odair. The glass shatters and the ticking finally stops and Finnick is left alone with a pure, true silence.

It's not what he wanted.

He sits up with such a speed that he's left dizzy. He shakes it off and his eyes search the floor for the paperweight. He locates it and picks it up, absentmindedly tossing it between his hands, trying to fight the urge to take the paperweight to his own head. He knows the exact amount of force it takes to crack a skull.

Anything to stop the waiting, the silence.

Most of the doors in the underbelly of the training center squeak when they open and close. The fix is undoubtedly simple—an Avox with a few hours and an oiling kit would be the end to the entire problem, but for some unfathomable reason, the squeaking has gone untreated for at least the four years Finnick has been mentoring. Until today, the noise had gnawed at Finnick every time someone came in or out of the District 4 mentoring room.

Today, however, in this unfamiliar and unoccupied conference room in the corner of the basement, Finnick is awoken by the squeak of the door as it opens. For the first time that he can remember, he is grateful for Capitol's negligence.

He is alert and in one of the old-fashioned spinning chairs by the time the door is fully opened. One of this year's Gamemakers, a boring man named Atlas Dunbryll, is standing in the doorway.

"You look a mess, Odair." Atlas steps into the room and kicks the door shut behind him. Finnick is less grateful for the squeak this time around.

"Bite me." Finnick regrets saying that almost as soon as it's out of his mouth, if only for the low quality of the insult. He's eighteen years old; his tongue is sharper than that.

"Now, now, Mr. Odair," Atlas says. His tone is condescending and it causes the blood flowing through Finnick's veins to flare up. He swallows down the anger and shrugs off the lingering need to do damage in response to the slightest bit of discomfort. "That's no way to talk to someone you're asking favors from." He more or less plops down on the sofa like he owns it, which Finnick assumes he probably does. "Besides," Atlas adds, an afterthought wrapped up in spikes, "I already have."

Finnick's fingers have gone numb from how hard he's been gripping the armrest. He wonders if they'll fall off before this conversation is over. "Is it done?"

"No." Atlas has no problems looking Finnick directly in his eyes as he says this. There is no remorse on his face.

"What?" Finnick is out of his seat now, but he restrains himself from advancing toward the Gamemaker. "I don't understand. We had a deal."

"Our deal," Atlas says as he kicks his feet up on the conference table, "was that if I finally got a taste of the Finnick Odair, I'd propose a flood. The team didn't buy it. There's nothing more that I can do."

There are so many thoughts, so many emotions, floating around Finnick's brain that he's grasping at straws trying to focus on one. When he finally settles on one, he forces himself to sit back down in his chair. If he winces, it only makes Atlas smirk a bit more. "I'm not sure how you can be done trying, after what you did, after what I let you do—" Finnick breaks off and bites down on his tongue. If he's learned anything since he was fourteen, it's when his arguments stop becoming helpful.

"Calm down, Mr. Odair, it's not as if I've defiled you in any way that someone else hasn't already—" Atlas' speech falters for a moment, presumably at the look on Finnick's face. "—unless, of course, that was the first time? If that's the case, you've got someone in your corner fighting for you hard, Finnick. But this battle is a battle you've lost, and let this be a lesson for you: the next time you try to use your sexual appeal to get what you want,

make sure you're using it on someone who has the direct power to get you what you want."

Atlas stands up to leave without another word. Finnick follows his lead, shaking with anger and something else, his nails digging crescents into his palms, when Atlas turns to face him. "You won't be following me."

Finnick is doing his best to swallow his emotions; he realizes that he's in a position of salvaging his plan, if he can just keep himself together. "With all due respect, sir, I wasn't going to follow you. My tribute is still alive in the arena and I need to be monitoring her process. The screen in this room isn't even on."

The look on Atlas' face doesn't change. "When I said that you wouldn't be following me, I meant that you wouldn't be leaving this room."

"That's absurd, Dunbryll. I'm a mentor, I need to be monitoring my tribute." Finnick's back to the blood in his veins reshaping itself into weapons and he's chewing on the inside of his cheek in between words.

"The Head Gamemaker feels that you are too invested in this tribute, Mr. Odair," Atlas says. "And he feels like it'd be best if you remained in this room until the final cannon."

"I'm not too invested; she is my tribute and it is my job to do everything in my power to get her out of that arena alive."

"It's insulting that you think we don't know what's been going on between you two in District 4, Mr. Odair. The Capitol knows everything. Your job is to look pretty and you can do that after the Games are over. Besides, there's nothing else you can do for your tribute."

Finnick moves to lunge at the Gamekeeper, but he's already gone with the squeak of the door and the heavy click of the lock.

The suitcase lands on the hard wood of the floor in the entrance with a dull thud. It doesn't echo in the halls, which is a small form of relief to Finnick in and of itself. He thanks the Avox the Capitol ordered to accompany him home and closes the door after she's gone. The door doesn't squeak on its hinges; instead, it closes with a welcoming and clinical sound, followed by the sharp click of Finnick turning the deadbolt.

And just like that, he's alone. Again.

He abandons the suitcase in the foyer and makes his way straight to the kitchen. There's a small chilling cellar in one of the lower cabinets designed to save the occasional trip down into the basement. He finds the only bottle of wine that they'd bought. It's shoved towards the back, almost like an afterthought. He pulls it out, maybe a bit rougher than needed for the situation, and pulls the corkscrew out of a drawer.

Sitting on the counter in the natural afternoon sunlight streaming in through the bay windows, the bottle of wine is like a joke. A cruel, stabbing joke in the form of a reminder. Finnick rips off the posted note attached to it, the one that has "wedding" scrawled across it in Annie's messy handwriting. He tosses the note in the bin and pulls at the corkscrew. There won't be a wedding.

Unable to remove the cork and unwilling to try again, Finnick smashes the bottle against the edge of the sink. The edges are jagged and at least half of the wine has made its way down the drain, but Finnick just wants to be drunk. He empties what's left of the wine into a mug and drains it. The unfamiliar taste of alcohol burns its way down his throat, choking him up, but it's not enough.

The staircase leading up to the second floor is steeper than he remembers. He reaches the landing and stops to take it all in. Everything on this floor, even more so than the guest floor, reminds him of everything that he lost in the fire, not the flood. He's not sure where to go from here.

To the right, there's the section of the floor that forks off. On the left side of the hallway, there's the guest room that's been empty since after that first year when Mags stayed with him. The room is adjacent to the upstairs guest bathroom, also unused and only touched by the Avox maids that the Capitol sends. The other side of the hallway was where the baby's room was going to be.

Finnick remembers the morning they'd painted it, pale yellow in an effort to be gender neutral. Annie had insisted. She'd also been laughing and carefree with paint covering the freckles on her shoulder.

Now Annie's dead, so Finnick takes a left to the loft-like master suite. He'd first moved into the room when he was fourteen; alone, scared, and scarred, the wide open white walls of the room had kept him up at night.

He woke up in the middle of the night, drenched in sweat and gasping for breath for a little over a year. In the darkness, he could hear the squawking of the genetically engineered thrushes. If he opened his eyes, the shadows on the wall took the form of the birds, ready, waiting. He would start screaming and Mags would come running, would hold him as he fought against her, his fingers itching for the familiarity of his trident.

One morning, he forced himself out of bed and down the cliff that the village resided on. He rented a boat from one of the fishermen down on the pier and rowed so far out that he could no longer see the shore and he waited. And he waited.

He rented a boat every morning and went out past all the other fishermen and tried to remember what it felt like to be alive. One morning, he rowed farther than he ever had before, even as an adventurous kid—because, even at fifteen, he could no longer be called a child—and laid in the boat in the morning sun. He nodded off in the boat, a side effect of sleep deprivation, and awoke when the heavy raindrops of an afternoon storm

started beating down on his chest. He glanced toward where he thought the shore was and started laughing, full and happy and open.

It took time—a lot of time—but gradually, he was able to sleep through the night. Mags moved out, he bought a boat, and started fishing again. When he ran out of room to store his preserved fish, he began paying to use a table at the market for a few hours, and that's where he met Annie Cresta.

Of course, he knew Annie Cresta. He'd like to say they were friends, once, when everything was uncomplicated and it didn't matter that she was the mayor's niece and that his family lived in a run-down shack by the seaside. They'd played together in the tidepools, bet each other who could swim the furthest out, and buried each other in the sand.

Then Finnick had been pulled out of school to help his father on the boat. He hadn't seen her much since.

But there she was, shopping with her friends and pointing happily at the little trinkets a girl from his old neighborhood was selling. He gave his customer their change and when he looked up again, Annie Cresta was right in front of his table.

And that had been that.

Here, now, in this bedroom that was his and then theirs, he can barely breathe. He practices the breathing exercises Mags had taught him, the ones he hadn't needed to use in years. It's all too much. Everything in the room reminded him of her.

On a rash decision, Finnick hauls the big, soft bed out of their—his—bedroom and down the stairs. He hauls it through the kitchen, past the broken wine bottle, and out the back door. He stands on the edge of the bluff, the mattress on the grass beside him, and looks down. At the bottom, the waves are crashing relentlessly into the rocks. He dangles his legs over, thinking of the morning he proposed. Without sending much warning to his legs, his brain decides it's time to stand up. He wobbles a little but rights himself before it becomes a problem. He lifts the mattress as high as he can and hurls it over the edge of the bluff. Its plummet is swift and unforgiving. In less than a thirty seconds, the mattress is caught up in the crush. Finnick stays there for ten, twenty, thirty minutes just watching as the mattress is pulled to and fro, against the sharp rocks and under the break of the waves.

That night, he takes a right at the top of the stairs. The bed is stiff and has a thin layer of dust covering it, but Finnick shakes it off. He wishes he could call someone—his mom, Mags, anyone—but he's all alone. He falls asleep in the guest bedroom in his own house and when he wakes up, he doesn't go down to the pier. He doesn't do anything at all. In the morning, Finnick wakes up in a strange bed several hours past dawn. The sunlight streaming in through the large windows in the master suite usually causes him to stir, but

the window in the guest bedroom on the other side of the house looks out on the village square, so the sunlight did not shine in on his face.

Out of habit, he reaches across the bed to pull Annie closer. His fist closes around the expensive duvet and his eyes flash open. For a few blissful, half-asleep moments, he'd forgotten that Annie wouldn't be there beside him. With that realization, everything comes crashing into Finnick and it's all too much.

In seconds, he's out of the guest bedroom and down the stairs. In the kitchen, he passes by the wine bottle from the day before. This time, he stops and grabs it from the counter. He disposes it in the rubbish bin on his way out the back door.

He passes the bluff he'd tossed the mattress down and he keeps walking and walking and walking until he reaches an area that isn't surrounded by sharp rocks at the bottom. With barely a second thought, Finnick runs toward the edge of the bluff and launches himself off it.

Time stops as he's suspended in midair. There's a gentle wind from the sea caressing his face and it's nice, peaceful, and then the world bottoms out on him. He's in a free fall and he knows he should be screaming. He should be terrified, but he's not. For the first time since he knew Annie wasn't coming back to him, he can breathe.

He's not paying attention to the actual fall, just the exhilarating rush from the adrenaline high. When the waves at the bottom open up to welcome him, he allows them to swallow him whole.

Under the crush of it, he feels totally at home. On instinct, he swims deeper and deeper until something in him tells him to stop. He's there, he's there under the surface of the sea, and the only moves he's making are to keep his body's natural buoyancy from taking hold. Other than that, everything is completely still.

In the distance, he sees her. He knows it's not actually her. Even down here, Finnick knows that Annie is dead and that she is not coming back to him. But, still, it's her. Her hair is flowing all around her in the water and her eyes are open, that piercing sea green he fell in love with. She's dressed in white, which further confirms that none of this is real, because in life Annie hated the color white, said it reminded her of things she hadn't lost yet. He'd never asked her what she meant by that, but now he's desperate to know.

Annie is telling him something, but he can't hear her through the weight of the water. She's closer to him now, somehow, but all that's coming out of her mouth is bubbles. It seems like she's given up and Finnick is about to panic, prepared to do anything to make her stay with him, but all she does is start to swim up. He follows her, slowly, cautiously, because he's afraid of what's on the other side of the surface. He can see the sun shining through the foam.

Annie's broken the surface and he can't make out her silhouette through the mess of life past the foam. He stops for a second, lets his legs dangle in the open water, before he pushes himself even harder. Finnick never liked playing catch-up as a child, but for Annie Cresta, he'd do anything.

Coming up feels like being punched in the face. He's not sure how long he was underwater, but the sharp, pulsing pain in his lungs is enough to know it'd been too long. He's choking from lack of oxygen and from the salt water he's inhaling. His head bobs underwater and he forces himself above the surface again.

When he opens his eyes, he's all alone in the water.

notes and warnings | Possible triggers for prostitution not atypical of canon, minor character death, depression, and maybe a suicide attempt if you squint. All are fairly subtle but proceed with caution if you think it might bother you.

Appendix I, "Meeting in the Middle"Meeting In The Middle by cutemara reviews

Please not Madge. Please not Katniss. Please not Prim. That is what keeps on playing over and over and over again in my mind.

Rated: K - English - Drama/Romance - Chapters: 2 - Words: 2,053 - Reviews: 9 - Favs: 2 - Follows: 6 - Updated: Mar 29 - Published: Mar 15 - [Gale H., Madge U.] - Complete

Disclaimer: The characters in this story and The Hunger Games belong to Suzanne Collins.

1. Gale

I'm standing with the other eighteen year olds waiting for the reaping to begin. I know she's waiting next to Katniss. I can see her pale gold hair gleaming to the right. I try to catch her eye but she's looking straight ahead at the stage where the escort is just stepping up to the mic.

Please not Madge. Please not Katniss. Please not Prim.
That is what keeps on playing over and over and over again in my mind.

I can hear a shocked murmur ripple through the crowd and I realize that I missed the name that was called. And when I look over to the right I see that Katniss is looking straight at me while Madge is no longer standing next to her. And then I see the white of her dress as Madge makes her way towards the stage.

I start moving forward but someone grabs the back of my shirt and holds me in place. I look behind me and see that it's Thom holding me back. He's one of the few people in the district who know that Madge and I have been seeing each other in secret for months now. The other is Katniss who is still looking at me and shaking her head.

I look back towards the stage and I see Madge standing up there, tall and straight. Her father is looking at her, his face grey and drawn. And she is looking at me, her eyes full of angry tears that she doesn't let fall.

The escort moves towards the reaping ball with all the boy's names. I look back at Madge and I keep my eyes on her as she keeps her eyes on me. She still won't let her tears fall and I'm proud of her for it.

Gale Hawthorne!

It takes me a moment to recognize my own name. There's a child screaming and I think it must be Posy. I look back at Madge and I see her close her eyes. A tear spills over and down her cheek.

And then the anger comes; I feel it in every part of me until I have to clench my fist to stop my hands from shaking.

I feel Thom give me a quick push and I start making my way up to the stage. I don't remember how I get there but the next thing I know I am standing on the stage looking out at a sea of faces I suddenly no longer recognize. Then I turn to my left and see Madge standing there looking at me with her eyes full of determination and angry, angry tears.

The Mayor starts to read the Treaty of Treason. His voice isn't as strong as usual and I hear him pause frequently but it all sounds distant and removed. All I see are the blue of her eyes and I remember.

I remember a time when I would have mistaken the disdain in her eyes as disdain for me. I remember when I hated her for what she had and what she ate and what she wore. I remember my shock at accidentally hearing her muttering in anger against the capitol after the last reaping. I remember challenging her about it. I remember meeting her in the meadow all through summer when we were both supposed to be asleep in our beds at night. I remember hatred and anger turning to confusion and then admiration. I remember one evening, looking into her eyes and realizing I loved her.

I don't know how long it takes but it feels like too short a time before the escort is telling us to shake hands. But Madge doesn't pause, she walks into my arms and I hold her tight and sink my hands into her beautiful, heavy, gold hair. My forehead is pressed against hers and I hear her murmur softly that she loves me, she loves me, she loves me, she loves me. I don't say it back. I can't. I can't say anything right now, too full of anger at the Capitol. Too full of fear for my family. Too full of fear for her. So I do the only thing I can do and catch her lips with mine. And as I pull away I hear her breath hitch softly as she looks up at me and I can see everything she feels reflected in her eyes.

I look to the left and see Peacekeepers approaching us, they look angry and grim and I wonder if Madge and I have just guaranteed for ourselves a swift and certain death or a long and painfully drawn out punishment.

I turn to my right and there is a sea of faces looking at us in confusion. Katniss is looking at someone in the boy's section. And then she turns to face us and raises the three middle fingers of her left hand to her lips and then holds them out to us. And then the blond baker boy in the boy's section does the same. And this continues until everyone in the square is raising their hands in support.

Madge and I let go of each other and do the same until the peacekeepers reach us and pull us back behind the doors. I don't know if they will give us time with our families after what we've just done so I search for my family in the crowd. The last thing I see is my mother standing with Posy and Vick and Rory at the back of the square. Posy is sobbing but her little hand is held high.

2. Madge

I'm standing next to Cinna waiting for the Tribute Parade to start. He has me dressed in skintight black with embellishments on the shoulders. I'm not quite sure what to expect but he tells me it will be fiery and passionate. That I shouldn't be afraid. But that itself is enough to make me fear what is coming next. I decide to trust him anyway.

It feels like days since I was last in Twelve. After the reaping, I thought we would at least get to say our good-byes but instead they made us wait in our individual rooms. And we waited. And waited. And waited. And no one came until the time for goodbyes had passed. Then they took us to the train and everything that came after is a blur. We ate the most extravagant of foods but I cannot remember what any of it tasted like. Effie kept talking but I cannot remember anything she said. I remember Gale throwing his gold plated knife against the wall but I cannot remember why. And I know Haymitch drunkenly promised me things but I cannot remember what they were.

I think I was numb.

All I remember is sneaking into Gale's room. Seeing him sitting on the edge of the bed, his back facing the door, his head in his hands, his shoulders shaking as he suppressed his sobs. All I remember is climbing onto the bed behind him and snaking my arms around his waist and pressing my cheek into his back and holding him as hard as I could. Breathing in the smell of him and preserving in my memory forever the feel of him against me.

Neither of us slept last night. And when Effie found us this morning her shrieking was probably heard all the way back home.

It's been a long day of torture in the name of beauty and longer still because I have not seen Gale. He's always been angry and that is part of what drew me to him. But since the reaping, he is unreachable in his anger. And I feel so alone.

Cinna stirs next to me and I turn to follow his gaze. I see Gale walking towards me but he looks so different that for a moment I am confused. There's a woman walking next to him, Cinna greets her and they move aside to talk in hushed whispers.

He's always been striking but I've never seen him so clean or clean-shaven. He's wearing the same skintight black that I am wearing with larger embellishments on the shoulders. He looks so tall and strong and proud and I think to myself he's mine, he's mine, how is he mine?!

But he doesn't look at me. He stands next to me and his beautiful grey eyes are cold and hard like steel as they watch the chariot, the horses, the other tributes, their stylists. And once again I feel so alone. I place my hand on his arms that are crossed in front of him. He spares me a quick glance before his eyes return to the other tributes, weighing, measuring, judging them.

I look back towards Cinna and Gale's stylist. They've been joined by Effie and Haymitch. I wonder why I've never noticed how close Effie and Haymitch always stand when next to each other. Haymitch doesn't look as drunk as usual and he must feel me staring at him because he turns to look at me and smirks. I honestly don't understand how my mother and he came to be such close friends but there it is. One of the great mysteries of my life.

I turn back towards Gale. He's still observing the other tributes but his stance has softened slightly. I walk towards the horses and decide to pet them for a while. It doesn't help much but the repetitive motion helps a little bit.

I'm not sure how much time passes but when I look up towards Gale, I realize he has been watching me. His eyes are soft now, soft and warm and grey.

Cinna walks up to me and directs me into the chariot and Gale steps up beside me. All around us tributes are stepping into their chariots and slowly the districts start leaving the tunnel. I can see the brightness outside. I can hear the noise of the crowds. It is overwhelming and I am glad to have Gale's warm, comforting strength on my right. Cinna arranges us to stand facing forward with our hands resting on the front of the chariot. As he leaves his whispers to me, "Stay strong!"

I don't understand but he just smirks at me and jumps off the chariot. I turn to my right to ask Gale what he means but stop when I see how intensely he is looking at me. The chariot starts moving forward with a jerk and I tighten my grip. The end of the tunnel and the chaotic brightness outside is drawing closer but I am only vaguely aware of it. Gale is looking me like I have hung the moon and stars. He leans down and softly places a kiss against my lips. I feel a fiery heat engulfing us both. And when he lets go we both turn to face the light drawing closer.

With him beside me, I cannot be afraid.

A/N: I read the book so long ago that I can't quite remember enough to know exactly how many liberties I took with the original description of the tribute parade...

Appendix J, "Sharing in Thirteen"Sharing In Thirteen by Ellana-san reviews

Utter crack in which Fulvia and Effie are both in 13 at the same time. Plutarch and Haymitch share a room, Fulvia and Effie share a room and both couples are sneaking around, trying to hide their relationship from the other. Utter crack, did I say? Hayffie. Heavensdew.

Rated: T - English - Romance/Humor - Chapters: 1 - Words: 1,480 - Reviews: 15 - Favs: 10 - Follows: 8 - Published: May 25 - [Haymitch A., Effie T.] [Plutarch H., Fulvia C.] - Complete

The White Bra Conundrum

"I hate this." Plutarch sighed, making no move to get out of bed.

Fulvia set about gathering her clothes, regularly checking the fluorescent numbers indicating time on the wall – time was important in Thirteen, certainly never to be wasted, and everything had to be strictly kept on schedule even, as unappealing as it sounded, secret sex meetings.

"It spices things up." she said, trying to see the bright side and slipping her underwear on at the same time. "Do we need spicing?" Plutarch frowned.

"Are you sure Haymitch won't come back yet?" she deflected.

She and Plutarch had been having an affair for almost as long as she had taken the job as his assistant – four years of sneaking around and hiding it from the press and general public – so, yes, their sex life needed spicing up, but there were things that, in her opinion, men didn't need to hear so she kept her thoughts to herself.

"He said he wanted to talk to Beetee." he said. "He's probably trying to convince him to override the security protocol to find some liquor."

Fulvia wasn't unsympathetic to Haymitch's problems but, at the same time, she had troubles understanding how he could have let himself go so low – and the fact that he had publicly criticized her idea to feed Katniss lines in a controlled shooting studio setting for the propos wasn't helping her opinion of him.

"Better Beetee than me." Plutarch chuckled. "Sharing rooms is a moronic rule."

They had tried to get a compartment together but they had been told in no uncertain terms that only married people could share as to maintain a proper level or order. Stupid rule if Fulvia ever heard one.

"It's not so bad." she countered.

"For you maybe, my sweet." he sighed. "You don't have to share with a slob."

Haymitch did have a tendency to leave a mess behind him, she mused, as she put on her grey jumpsuit. Plutarch who was a very neat man – bordering on obsessive in her opinion – must have been going crazy picking up after him. She didn't have that problem. Sharing a room with Effie Trinket was very much like being back in university, it included long late at night chatting and a brand new crazy friend. Fulvia hadn't known the other Capitol woman before coming to Thirteen and she had feared they wouldn't get along well – mainly because Fulvia had been committed to the rebels' cause since she was nineteen and Effie had been screaming outrage about her abduction for days – but they had found a common ground somewhere. Effie, Fulvia was starting to find out, was much more than a pretty face despite her sometimes clueless behavior.

The only problem with having a roommate was that she couldn't sleep with Plutarch – in both meanings of the term – as often as she wanted to even though she was secretly enjoying the sneaking around. It made her feel young and it added a little touch of fun to those depressing war times.

Or at least, it did, until her eyes spotted a white lacy bra in a corner.

"What is that?" she asked, picking up the piece of lingerie and wriggling it in front of Plutarch's face. "This isn't mine. Did you have another woman here?" She narrowed her eyes at him, an angry flush reddening her skin to the point she knew the silver tattoos on her cheeks must have been even more pronounced. "I swear, Plutarch, if you have been cheating on me..."

"I don't know where that came from!" Plutarch denied defensively. "Are you sure it's not yours?"

"Certain." She never wore white lingerie, she didn't even own white lingerie. "And it certainly isn't Haymitch's or does he like wearing women's underwear?"

Her sarcasm flew high over Plutarch's head. He was staring at the bra with a puzzled expression. "That's weird. Maybe there was a mistake with the laundry?"

"The laundry." she hissed. "Is that the excuse you're going with? The laundry? And what's the laundry's name I wonder?" "Fulvia." he said in a disapproving tone. "You know I love you."

She did.

She also knew love didn't always go hand in hand with being faithful.

"Does Haymitch have a girlfriend?" she frowned.

He almost choked on his laughter. "Aside from his right hand?" He rolled his eyes. "Trust me, there was a mistake with the laundry." She wasn't in the very least convinced.

"Well I'm keeping it hostage." she huffed. "Tell Laundry if she wants it back, she will have to ask me."

"Fulvia..." he sighed.

She made very sure to slam the door behind her.

She stopped by her room to drop off the offensive piece of lingerie on her way to Command and spent the rest of the day glaring at Plutarch each time he so much as brushed a finger against her shoulder to get her attention. The war was more pressing than those personal matters though so she pushed her hurt feelings aside and focused on her job. When she stumbled back to her compartment, late at night, completely exhausted, it was only to find Effie already asleep just as tired as she was.

It wasn't until the next morning that she remembered the white bra conundrum. However, she couldn't find it where she had left it.

"I left a bra here, did you move it?" she asked Effie.

The escort was busy wrapping a piece of cloth around her hair to conceal it from view. Never mind what Fulvia had to say, Effie wouldn't even try to conform to the strict uniform rule – and when she saw her own reflection in the mirror, she truly didn't blame her. Those jumpsuits did nothing for a woman's figure.

"Oh, sorry, was it yours?" Effie frowned. "I thought it was one of mine. It's hard to keep track in this place. Everything is so standard. It's in the dresser's drawer."

Curious, Fulvia peeked in said dresser to find a few white bras. Some were plain, some had been customized and others had clearly been stolen here and there given that they were the lacy kind Thirteen would never officially approve of.

She knew without having to investigate that she wouldn't find another collection like this one in all Thirteen. Which meant... "Did you have sex with Plutarch?" she asked outward, turning back to look at her with a frown.

What would be the odds of finding another women in that District with lacy bras that perfectly matched the one she had found? "What?" Effie squealed. "Are you out of your mind? Certainly not!"

Fulvia narrowed her eyes. "Are you sure?"

"I think I would have noticed, yes." the escort answered disdainfully. She made a face. "Besides, he is very much not my type."

Fulvia relaxed slightly but her jealousy suddenly morphed into curiosity. "Did you sleep with Haymitch?"

"Are you going to list all the available men in the District?" Effie retorted, eyebrows lifted high, right before suspicion flashed in her blue eyes. "Are you interested in Haymitch?"

"Ew, no!" Fulvia cringed.

"Well, why the odd questions?" Effie huffed, irritated.

"Oh, never mind..." she sighed. "I suppose it was a mistake with laundry."

And now she would have to apologize to Plutarch. Although she could think of very fun ways to make it up to him...

"I would advise against making a move on Haymitch." Effie said casually. "He hates Capitol women, you know. Even rebel ones. In fact... He hates women period."

The comment was thrown over her shoulder as Effie passed her wrist under the scanner to get her daily schedule.

"I will... keep it in mind." Fulvia promise, not knowing what else to answer.

Still... She started to wonder if it was a laundry mistake after all or if Effie was simply a very skilled liar.

However, the escort switched subject to Katniss and the next propos and deftly avoided any mention of her other victor.

It didn't stop Fulvia from being suspicious.

Appendix K, "Sparkling Frost"

Sparkling Frost by Miss Ami-chan reviews

Friend & I wondered what sparked the frostiness between K&P at start of CF & my Peeta muse gave me this: Two weeks before the Victory Tour. Peeta is muddling through life back in District 12, one evening while checking on Haymitch he begins to realize the weight of becoming mentors things spiral on from there, leading to the bakery, the Hob, and a meeting with Katniss. [COMPLETE]

Rated: T - English - Drama/Friendship - Chapters: 4 - Words: 4,059 - Reviews: 9 - Favs: 5 - Follows: 9 - Updated: Mar 26 - Published: Mar 24 - Haymitch A., Katniss E., Gale H., Peeta M. - Complete

Chapter 1, Haymitch

"You know you don't have to eat dinner with me," Haymitch grumbles as I set the basket down on the table and unfold the towel which has been keeping the pie warm so I can take it out and put it on the table.

"What's the sense in us both eating the same thing alone in separate houses?" I ask him.

He grunts assent, "Fine. Fine," he shoves papers and things aside and offers a plate to me. I take it and put it's crusty covered self in the sink with the stack already there that need to be washed.

"I have clean ones from my house," I tell him.

"You'll make someone a good wife some day," he muses, peering at me through the amber liquid in his glass.

I take out the rest of the contents of the basket: two plates, a pie cutter, a knife and fork for each of us given I knew there was no guarantee of any of these things being present or clean, "Who knows?" I decide is the safest answer.

"I hope you're not holding out for Katniss," he says, "There are plenty of other young women around here, and I know you have to be getting messages from the Capitol. I know I did," he snorts, "believe it or not," he takes another drink.

"You were the one who told me it wasn't over," I remind him as I cut the pie.

He sniffs deeply as the steam comes out along with more of the scent, "Did I say that?"

"Yes, and then you took half a bag of pastries."

"I don't know if I'm holding out for anything. Nothing is up to me, but I can't just turn things off. I wish I could. Let's...just talk about something else."

"Fair enough," Haymitch raises his glass, as he pulls his piece of pie towards him, "Have you seen your family recently?"

I close my eyes, really, Haymitch?

"I made the pie at home if that's what you mean."

"Kid, they're the only family you've got."

"They're really not," I take my own piece and sit down, "Come on eat. The dough will help soak up some of this," I wave at all the bottles around the room with my fork, "stuff you put in your system, and the vegetables will do you good."

"Are you my mother now?"

"Apparently I'm your wife, so I guess that makes Katniss your husband. We've got to keep you alive at least long enough to mentor us through mentoring someone else through the games..." I shudder at the thought as it fully sinks in. We have to send two more unfortunates off to possibly die.

What was it he said on the train? Embrace the probability of your imminent demise? Before us District 12 hadn't had a victor since his games, the 50th games, that's 46 kids he's watched die his first two he was maybe a year or so older than, like we will be. How are we going to do this?

"Realizing why I said it's never over now, aren't we?" Haymitch remarks. He pushes the bottle across the table towards me but I don't touch it. "Your games were a Quarter Quell too, weren't they?"

"Oh, no! We are not doing that tonight," he says, or maybe ever his face continues without him having to, "I think you can head home. Leave the pie. You can collect everything tomorrow. I'll probably have finished it by then. Maybe the husband and I will have a piece when she brings me more booze."

"When she checks to make sure you're alive you mean."

"Same old. Same old."

"We are going to talk about this," I tell Haymitch as I leave the house. He waves a hand dismissively and shuts the door.

I make my slippery, sliding way down the street to my house, muttering about having left the cane in Haymitch's hallway and reminding myself that I need the practice walking on the snow and ice without it even if I have already fairly well mastered regular terrain. At least I'm not trying to sneak through woods interrupting Katniss trying to hunt things I

can just imagine how well that would go with the new leg it was bad enough when I had two. Neither of us has to worry about that any more though, thankfully.

It's a sleepless night. Faceless children dying on screen no matter how many parachutes we're able to send. One freaks out too much and steps off the platform before time is called and blows up before things even start and after that I give up on sleep and paint.

Dark shapes swirl and bleed across the canvas but at least they leave my head for a while. I bet the Capitol's check-up cameras would love this type of Mellark original.

"Two weeks and counting!" Effie's reminder of the Victory tour and the newly amended itinerary part five is in my messages. I read it but don't retain any of the information. It's never over. Haymitch reminds me toasting amber liquid. I lean my head down on the cool surface of the kitchen table for a while.

What did happen in the 2nd Quarter Quell? And for that matter where are Haymitch's family? That must be why he was on at me...maybe he has a point. Well, of course he has a point, Peeta, don't be an idiot. I sit up and massage my temples. I just don't know if they'll agree. They're the ones who wrote me off, after all. I wasn't supposed to come back. Sure they were all smiles and happy at the station while the cameras were still here, but it's been upset and annoyance that I'm still around, unless they want something, and Mom won't even come then.

Still...

I find myself filling a bag with trade gifts, dates, goat cheese, figs, oranges, chocolate and slowly picking my way down the path from Victor's Village towards the town itself. The additional snow and ice make it difficult with the new leg but I'm not going to stop at Haymitch's for the cane and I'm not going to focus too much on the fact that "snow" is what is making it difficult for me to walk because then I might either laugh or cry too much and really fall down. No, practice without the cane is good. I need to stop relying on it. I need to walk normally. It'll stop me getting those looks or I'll get less of them, at least, anyway.

As I pass the turn to The Hob I try to add up how many bottles of liquor there are. Much as I don't like what Haymitch does to himself the weeks he was without were so much worse—we thought he would die, trying to ration him is better it was decided between Katniss, her mother, Prim and I. So, we keep watch on him, making sure there his diet isn't solely liquid. Katniss brings meat from the butcher and the occasional turkey or squirrel and I bring baked goods designed to last a while. We make sure he has fruit. We've tried to work other drinks in but that hasn't worked so far. His color is better though. Katniss' mother maintains we're doing some good, but for how long are we delaying the inevitable? And today I find myself wondering how long will it be before Capitol life and mentoring take it's toll on us and we stop trying to do anything but drown our own pain the way he has his or worse?

Chapter 2, Bakery

As always I can smell the bakery before I get there. It should be my father that's working this morning if I'm tracking the schedule correctly but I'm not sure which of my brother's will be on with him. I work my way around to the back door and knock carefully. I hear some talk about it being a little early for hunter's trading, and then my father opens the door and blinks a little, slightly confused and then manages a smile, "Peeta," he says, softly, and wipes his hands on his apron and moves forward instead of backward, which leads to an awkward stumbling situation and him catching me by the arms so I don't slip over, and then us both on the ground and not on the steps, but everyone is upright and nothing is spilled.

It takes me a moment, "Mom's inside not Jeemi."

He nods, solemnly.

"I should just go then. None of us will be able to talk."

He grabs my arm and holds it tightly. I wonder for half a moment if I got more strength from him or her, "You must have come all the way down here for a reason."

"Yes, and I realize now that it was a stupid one."

"Peeta-" he says, with dismay, "Don't be like that."

"How am I supposed to feel when you sneak me outside to have even half a conversation because—are you afraid of her? or ashamed of me?"

He pulls me to him then, "I've never been ashamed of you," he whispers, "Never."

I feel the hot tears welling up inside me and try to bite them back, "Could have fooled me," I pull away. Don't fall down. Don't fall down. Thank you.

"Where are you?!" The door opens and there she is. Pinched and angry.

He turns, hands up in placating gestures, automatically.

I don't know which of us she's more shocked to be looking at standing out here in the frost. My father skin reddening in the chill or me in my thick coat, bag slung over my shoulder with what I imagine are red eyes and red nose looking suspicious and guilty.

"Why are you here?"

"Now, dear," my father starts but is cut off by the glare.

"Don't worry," I shake the bag, "I came to buy. I'll be gone quickly."

"We're not open yet," she snaps.

"I thought you'd want me in and out before anyone could see," I wheedle, "Why do you think I came to this door?" My father looks at his feet.

She steps back from the door, turning away from me in one swift motion. I climb up onto the first step and knock the snow and mud off my boots and then walk into the small room in the back where all the supplies are kept. The smell is stronger inside and it's so very warm. That was one thing we never had to worry about: freezing to death. They're making honey oat bread and plain, and there's also the scent of raisin and berry muffins that I can catch in the air, berry jam pastries.

She goes back to kneading dough on the opposite side of the room, "See to the customer then," she instructs my father. "Come through," he says, ignoring her protest, "You know the way."

We walk into the front where the cases and ovens are. I unbutton my coat to try and ease some of the heat and see him looking at the clothes I'm wearing. He reaches to touch the fabric of the shirt and then hesitates wiping his hand on his apron again. I feel slightly embarrassed. Thanks to all the interviews we've had to do I have more clothes now than the entire household here put together probably has.

"What is it?" he asks.

"A shirt?" I can't help myself.

"I know that!" he replies, "I'm not that stupid."

"Let's just not," I tell him, "I don't want to get you in trouble for fraternizing with the dead."

He sighs and looks out of the front of the shop window for a moment.

I set the bag down on the counter and pull out the four oranges, figs and one of the boxes of dates. He picks up one of the oranges and inhales the scent,

"Do you have more of these?"

"Not at the moment. How many more would you want?"

"You don't want the answer to that," he says. I think for a moment that I see her near the edge of the doorway but I'm not sure.

"I can probably get a dozen. A true dozen, not one of ours."

His lip twitches, "I can work with that."

I expected so, "I also have this," I show him the goat cheese.

"Now you're just being evil," he jokes, "What are you trying to get exactly? The whole shop?"

"It's something for her, isn't it?" her voice cuts in, "We're not making anything for her."

"I wouldn't have expected you to," I answer, "What is your problem with Katniss, exactly?"

"Peeta-" my father warns, but I am so done.

I know Katniss would only trade squirrels with him. I remember Her grumbling about things but a lot of the time I would tune her out because she would go on about so many things and as long as they weren't likely to end with the rolling pin or something else along that kind it was just easier.

"Why would I want to make something for that rude and obnoxious girl?" she asks.

"Oh, I don't know, perhaps because she's the reason District 12 has victors. You did say that to me when we left, didn't you? You were quite happy about her going then because you thought she might win. The whole District gets more to eat now because of her. You should be kind to your victors. I bet you were happy enough to make things for the return banquet."

"That was work."

"Right. Of course, she brought me back with her. You weren't counting on that. Would bleeding to death on top of the Cornucopia have been an embarrassing death or not, out of curiosity? Would it have met with your approval? I would like to know before I leave with two, actually better make that three, of the berry pastries, and a dozen of the small loaves of bread," I tell my father, "I have people to visit," she can't technically get angry with me for giving the bread away any more given I'm actually paying for it but I know it must irritate her all the same so I make sure she knows. In this case I am that petty. I remember the beatings though and the extra names in the pot.

She can't give me an answer though to any of the questions. I can see her hands twitching. She wants to go for me. I want to dare her. I know it's not wise. My father bags up things quickly and offers them to me. I leave the items on the counter. I give him a bag of chocolate pieces and some coin also to cover things and put my items in the trade bag.

"I'll be back next week with the oranges we talked about and some other things," I tell him.

He takes my arm and holds it tightly with his hand. It's a different type of squeeze than earlier.

"Me too." I answer, and walk around the counter, unlock the front door of the bakery and walk out onto the street.

Chapter 3, Gale (briefly)

The Hob is already bustling when I walk in, despite it being so early. When is it not? People are setting up and vendors appreciate the fresh bread, and the hand to hold things up or carry things. We each chat for a while, things going on around and about, did you hear that so and so is pregnant? or that so and so—her husband is sick and her son can't pull so many extra shifts being so young. My heart aches and I make notes to see what arrangements I might be able to pull off. Though I'm told it would have been worse if we hadn't won, the extra tickets they would have had to put in to make it through.

I haven't been in the Hob much before. I would drop things off only on occasion so I find out what each of them trade and sell. I'd heard about Sae from Katniss before and her tasty soups which I let her know. I'm told to come back later once she has things properly on the go and get a sample and then some. I'll come back with coin then too and buy some things.

"What are you doing slumming down here?" Gale's voice sounds behind me breaking away from his co-workers on the way to mine to talk at me, "Didn't think this was your scene."

"There are a lot of things you don't know about me," I point out.

I have two loaves of bread left. I can perhaps take some to Haymitch—I doubt Gale wants anything from me even though his family would appreciate it. Perhaps it would be better to take to the Everdeens, Haymitch might still be pissed, plus odds are he drank himself to sleep and is nowhere near awake yet.

"I probably won't see you again before you leave so watch yourself on the tour, okay?"

"What?"

"On the tour, with Katniss, watch yourself-"

"You really don't know me, Gale, if you think-"

There's conflict on his face as he looks at me and I'm annoyed I can't read what it means.

"Besides," I tell him, "I'm more afraid of her than you."

That gets a laugh from him and my release from the conversation so I can go.

Chapter 4, Katniss

I wind up dropping bread with Mrs. Everdeen and Prim who gives me a hug. Katniss is off hunting, as to be expected. Gale will be down in the mine by now and they have some sort of arrangement where she hunts and gives the food to his family given he can't be out there in the woods all the time now. I can't imagine what it must be like being down there twelve hours a day, six days a week for all the issues our family had there was the benefit to being born in the Merchant district and never having the risk of working down in the mines.

"Two weeks, huh?" Prim asks, "Excited?"

I give a slight laugh, "Not exactly."

"Yeah," she nods, "I can't imagine all those people staring at you all the time and then my sister..." she trails off.

"Prim come help me with something!" Mrs. Everdeen calls from the other room, "I'm sure Peeta has things to do."

Prim gives me a hug and I see myself out, and trudge the couple of houses down to my own property. Things to do...sure...

The Capitol interviewers always want to catch up on everything we're supposed to be doing and there's a chance they'll want to talk to us individually when they come to do the pre-interviews before the Victory Tour starts; but there are things that wouldn't go over well like the fact I sleep in my living room because the house is too big for me, or the venting paintings but cheery things those they love: landscapes, flowers and Katniss. They eat up pictures of Katniss and it's not like I mind drawing pictures of her either.

I open the front windows to let the air in before I start to sketch. Her face, in profile, braid curling over her shoulder. I surround her with a necklace of her namesake flowers and then other local blooms fill the remainder of the picture. I'm not sure how long I've been working when Katniss calling my name stops me in the middle of a stamen. I go out into the hallway and she's there, looking uncomfortable in a wool coat.

"I knocked," she says, "You didn't answer." "I'm mapping out a painting," I explain.

"Oh," she nods.

"They prefer the happy ones and everything." "Right."

"Was there something..?" I can't help but trail off when she turns and for a moment her pose mirrors the painting, "...you wanted?" "Thank you for the bread."

"You're...welcome but you didn't have to come all the way over here and thank me for that. It's no problem...I'm happy to do it. I..." "You what?" she asks, stepping further up the hallway.

I'm hesitant to let her all the way in to the living room; she might not take well to her portrait. She doesn't seem to see good in herself, always, and she would likely be irritated I'm drawing her anyway.

"You just—you don't have to thank me every time..." we're going round in circles. I don't understand this constantly owing me for bread. I owe her for everything I have—everything I am, and my mother—why did I even go up to the bakery?

"What was that look for?" she asks.

"Why do you think you owe me anything?" I demand. It comes out harsher than I meant but all this stumbling and fumbling has finally broken me. We've been on glass and eggshells for months. Is this why Gale is angry all the time?

"Peeta-

"No, Katniss-" I move away from her, and wind up in the living room, "I wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for you—there is nothing you need to thank me for. I can't-" She gets me all in knots. My words gum up, 'for once' Mom would say. She's echoing all through me right now and I can't stand it. I shouldn't have gone over there, "I can't keep doing this. We're going to be on a train together in two weeks. In six months we're going to be mentoring tributes-

"Did you draw that?" she points to the canvas.

"Change the subject why don't you?"

"Did you?"

"No, someone broke in to my house and drew a picture of you-" "Don't be like that!" she snaps back.

You're ignoring my point. How am I supposed to be? I'm sick of this!" I wave a hand between the two of us, "this—this..."

"This what?"

"This! Everything is so—broken."

"I'm broken?" The look on her face stabs me.

"No!" Way to go. Brilliant, "No, our relationship."

"We don't..."

"I know we don't have that sort of relationship. The whole arena versus reality thing is something that was made painfully clear to me months ago."

"Peeta-" she reaches for my arm, and I want to pull away, but at the same time I can't, "I am sorry about that. I didn't mean-" she pauses, holding my hand there and sighs deeply, "There are so many things..."

"Then explain them to me."

She releases my arm and turns away.

"Right! Great!"

The door bangs open, "Are you serious right now?" Haymitch demands, "Her I expect this from! Not you! You're supposed to be the calming influence! What the hell is going on?"

"Butt out, Haymitch!" Katniss says at the same time I tell him that it's not his business right now.

"That's where you're wrong, kiddies," he says, "Nice sketch," he waves towards the canvas by the window, "Capitol will be all over that once it has color." "Not helping, Haymitch." I tell him as Katniss clenches her fists and looks towards the door.

"Look, you two are always my business and for the rest of my life you will be my business whether I want it or not, and having a screaming match that they can probably hear down in the bottom of the lowest mine shaft is definitely my business. The Capitol cameras will be here in two weeks you need to get it together! They're expecting love birds so you need to stop this nonsense," he points to Katniss.

"He started it this time!" she points to me.

"I'm sorry for trying to get you to talk to me about...anything," I retort, "I mean it's not as if couples do that ever."

"Peeta, please, just stop," Katniss says.

She reaches for me again but this time I pull back, "No, you stop. I'm just—I can't right now. I'm leaving."

"This is your house-" Katniss points out.

"I don't care. I'm going!" I walk past Haymitch and go out the front door but once outside I don't know what to do with myself because I've just made things so much worse.

Appendix L, "Stuck in a Moment"

Stuck in a Moment by sponsormusings reviews

For a 'people person' like Peeta, being stuck inside with little access to the outside world was not the most ideal situation. But as snow sets in across District Twelve, having Katniss there to keep him company through the storm definitely helps... A submission for Prompts in Panem, March/April 2015. Day 4.

Rated: T - English - Romance - Chapters: 1 - Words: 1,419 - Reviews: 13 - Favs: 23 - Follows: 11 - Published: Apr 6 - Katniss E., Peeta M. - Complete

"That snow just won't let up."

Katniss' words were whispered in his ear, and he smiled, snuggled in closer to her. "Is it such a bad thing? If it keeps snowing, we'll be stuck here for days. Alone."

She scoffed. "We've already been stuck inside for four. But you'd like an excuse to stay in bed even longer, wouldn't you?"

"With you I would," he agreed, lifting his hand so that it threaded through her long, black hair. It wasn't often that she left it free and loose like this, but he liked the times that she did. He liked the feel of it through his fingers, the silky strands, even the faint smell of honeysuckle from her shampoo. He remembered the first time he'd smelt it, those long nights on the train when they curled around each other to ward off nightmares, to try and ease each others pain.

She shifted slightly so that she could look up at him. "But you know how you get when you're housebound for too long. You need the interaction. I feel like very soon I'm probably going to be living with Mr Peeta 'Grumpy' Mellark."

"I won't be grumpy," he promised. "You know there's no one I'd rather be with than you."

With a wry smile, Katniss pulled away, slid out of bed and wrapped his old, deep blue robe around her body. "I know that's true. But I also know that you like to talk with Haymitch about his geese, and Thom about rebuilding the bakery, and Delly about her kids. You know you always go stir-crazy without the company." He watched as she padded across the room and slipped into the bathroom, her feet bare and silent against the wooden floorboards. He heard the running of water, light splashes that told him she was likely washing her face.

She was right, Peeta supposed. While Katniss could go for weeks without seeing anyone, and was much more interested in hunting in solace, he did need to be involved, did need to speak to people. Especially now, as Twelve continued to rebuild, as they continued to pull themselves back together after a rebellion, after a war. It made him feel a part of the District again, after feeling removed from it for so long.

But it wasn't often that they just got to be them. That they got to sit here in the house, and were just Katniss and Peeta, rather than the Mockingjay and the damaged victor.

He sat up so that he was resting against the headboard, the sheets pooling around his waist. Scars decorated his body - across his waist, over his right shoulder, and his eyebrow still had a bare strip where the hair had seared away and just wouldn't grow back. But he'd stopped trying to hide the scars - ones he'd earned when going in after Katniss in the City Circle as fire raged and bombs fell - in the hopes that it would encourage Katniss to do the same. It was slow going; mostly, she still preferred to cover her body head to toe, though it mattered little to him - he saw nothing but her. Occasionally though, like today, she relaxed a little, and her guard came down.

Those were the days he thought that maybe, just maybe, they were beginning to really heal. That things could be good again. That always was a promise they could finally keep.

Moving out of the bathroom, Katniss crossed the room and curled herself into a plush, wide-backed chair by the window. She glanced outside, at the snow that continued to fall steadily, constantly; it covered the street like a white blanket. "It really is coming down hard. I don't think I've seen it this bad in years."

Peeta followed her gaze, worry furrowing his brow. "Maybe I should call Haymitch, make sure he's okay. Check that he's got enough food." Katniss nodded absently. "Probably a good idea."

Throwing back the quilt, he reached for the sweatpants he'd discarded on the floor the night before, tugged them on up over his hips. "You want me to bring anything back up? Tea?"

"Tea would be nice," she smiled.

"Alright, I'll be back in a few. I'll tell Haymitch you miss him." "Ha!"

Grinning to himself, Peeta jogged down the stairs and into the kitchen, filled the teapot with water from the sink before placing it on the stove to boil. He reminded himself to ask Effie the next time he spoke to her about having another phone installed upstairs, especially now that they were both living here, and moved through to the living room, snatching the phone from its cradle. Haymitch was speed dial one, though he knew he'd never tell him that. He'd just roll his eyes, tell him to quit being so damn sentimental.

It rang and rang, the monotonous tone echoing in Peeta's ears, and he was just about to hang up when it connected. "What?"

"Hello to you too, Haymitch."

"Whaddya want, kid? Sleeping here."

"I just wanted to make sure you were okay, that you had enough food. At this stage, it looks like we might be stuck inside for a few more days."

"I got my liquids, and I got some package shit that Effie sent with the last train. I'll survive."

Peeta crossed to the window, parted the curtain slightly so he could look across the street to Haymitch's. It was dark, the drapes closed tightly to the weather outside. "You sure? I baked some bread yesterday, I could come over-"

"Kid, I told you I'm fine. Just stay put. Don't need you getting frozen solid in the middle of the street."

Peeta nodded. "Alright then. I guess we'll see you when it lets up."

"We?"

"Katniss and I, of course. Who else?"

Haymitch didn't say anything - he was silent, except for the sound of his laboured breathing down the phone. When he finally spoke, his voice was low, almost reverent. Almost broken. "Peeta, you remember that Katniss..."

He trailed off, and Peeta tucked his hand in the pocket of his sweats. "Remember that Katniss what?"

The sound of scratching filtered through the phone line until the old mentor sighed. "Nevermind. But...maybe you should bring some bread over. Might be a good idea for you to get out of the house for a bit. We both know being cooped up inside isn't the best for you."

Peeta laughed. "I knew you were lonely!"

"Yeah, I'm lonely. Something like that." Haymitch coughed. "So, uh come over. I'll be here."

"I'll be there soon."

"Good." The dialtone beeped in his ear, and he moved back to the side table, dropped the phone back in its cradle.

"Is he alright?"

Peeta turned, found Katniss curled up, much like she had been upstairs, in the chair by the window.

"I think he's lonely. Tried to tell me at first he was fine, but then suddenly changed his mind. I'm going to take some bread over to him. You want to come?"

She shook her head. "No, I'll stay here." "Okay."

He took his time, taking the water off the boil and making Katniss a tea, wrapping the bread up in wax paper, adding some pastries he'd also made the day before. He wrapped himself up in layer upon layer of outer gear and by the time he was done, he felt like a giant marshmallow.

"I'll be back soon," Peeta told Katniss, placing her tea on the coffee table and leaning down to place a soft kiss on her forehead. "I love you." Her cheeks flushed. "I love you too," she said quietly.

He smiled widely - he still wasn't used to her saying those words, words he'd never thought he'd hear fall from her lips, and directed at him no less - and opened the front door, inhaled sharply at the cold that practically slapped him in the face.

"Peeta?"

He glanced over his shoulder at Katniss, at the way the small smile played across her lips. "Always," she mouthed, and he nodded.

He closed the door behind him and headed across the street, part of him already knowing that when he got back, the tea would be cold and untouched.

Appendix M, “Such Great Heights”

Such Great Heights by bleachers reviews

In which Finnick is rain-soaked, late, and on the cusp of something great.

Rated: T - English - Romance/Angst - Chapters: 1 - Words: 2,101 - Reviews: 10 - Favs: 4
- Published: Jun 21 - [Annie C., Finnick O.] - Complete

Somewhere in Bushwick, there is a sidewalk in desperate need of a touch-up. In recent years, it has fallen to a state of functional disrepair, so as a result of the torrential downpour puddles line the street by the time the sun sets over Brooklyn.

Finnick Odair is not thinking about that. What he is thinking about is that he is currently late for his boss's New Year's party. The party, the one he'd been lucky to be invited to, is all the way in Manhattan and started four minutes ago. In his haste to reach the hotel and hopefully slip in unnoticed, he forgets his umbrella. Not thirty seconds after leaving his apartment building, he steps directly into one of the deeper puddles.

Finnick looks forlornly at his sopping shoes and then at his watch. Sighing, he treads back up the staircase and tries to salvage his outfit for the night.

He arrives at the entrance to the building a good forty-five minutes late and finds his way to the ballroom without much fanfare, a judgmental look from the doorman notwithstanding. Fifteen minutes in, no one seems to have noticed he's swapped his dress shoes for Chuck Taylors, so Finnick counts the beginning of the night as a win.

Most of the night rushes by in a blur of small talk and champagne, neither of which Finnick minds. He finds himself on the balcony talking to one of the other recently promoted interns, this one a new-to-the-payroll member of the accounting team, when the countdown to midnight begins.

He grabs a flute of champagne and rushes through the French doors, seamlessly integrating himself back into the party. 3, 2, 1...

After the ball drops, the party fizzles. Feeling clustered and uncomfortable, but not wanting to arrive late and leave early, Finnick exits the main ballroom and somehow finds his way to the building's rooftop. There are already quite a few people up here, their outlines illuminated by the paper lanterns strung across the expanse.

It is now officially January in New York, so the rooftop is nothing short of freezing. Finnick fiddles with the coat check ticket in his pocket, debating whether he should go back downstairs to grab his winter jacket. As he's making a mental pros and cons list, a waiter passes by with a tray occupied by champagne flutes. Finnick reaches out and grabs one from the edge of the tray and thanks the waiter with a smile. He's already nursing a safety buzz, so he might as well drink to keep himself warm.

It's already as if some sense of pressure has been lifted off Finnick's chest. He's never been one to voluntarily socialize outside of his friend group and had initially planned to R.S.V.P. "no" to the party altogether, but his roommate suggested it was probably against his best interests to decline an invitation from his new boss. Still, he finds it much easier to breathe up here, away from the actual heartbeat of the party.

Finnick finds a few of his coworkers near a bar stationed outside one of the elevator service rooms. He's launched into a conversation about the upcoming MLB opening day. Thomas from Marketing is going on about the apparently exciting roster for the New York Yankees. As a long-suffering fan of the Mets, Finnick bites his tongue and forces a few non-committal words of encouragement out of his mouth.

"I'm just saying," Thomas is saying in between sips of his gin and tonic, "this season is going to blow last season out of the water, man. We've got Rodriguez back. Nothing is going to stop us this season."

By now, Finnick really wants to say something, but he figures calling out an overrated performance enhancing drug abuser isn't worth making enemies out of his co-workers.

After a few more torturous minutes of Thomas and the others discussing the Mets' Subway Series rivals, he finds his phone in his back pocket. The bright light of his lock screen blinds him temporarily. Once his eyes adjust, he reads the messages he'd missed while he was mingling and sees that it's a little after 2am. With one final shot and a round of goodbye to his coworkers, he calls it a night.

The elevator ride down to the bottom floor seems to stretch on forever. Finnick isn't exactly sober, but he was known in college for his ability to hold his alcohol, so his vision is only blurry around the edges when the elevator dings.

Finnick makes his way across the lobby to the small coat check room near the front entrance. It's a bit crowded—apparently Finnick picked a popular time to make his exit—but he manages to make it up to the front of the line and hand the crumpled up ticket to the woman behind the desk.

The woman smiles at him as she hands him his jacket.

"Thank you," he says as he's shrugging it on. He was the last person in the line, so he figures he might as well take his time.

"It was my pleasure, sir." The words come out in a saccharine uniform and practiced manner. Finnick isn't all that surprised, considering the nature of the event, but something about the woman's voice makes him look up.

Connected to the voice, he finds a woman of around his age with dark chestnut hair and eyes that remind him of the trips to the sea he took with his father. She's not looking at him anymore—her eyes are looking downward and it sounds like her hands are ruffling

some papers behind the desk—so Finnick ducks out of the coat check room. He throws a "Good night!" over his shoulder, but he doesn't wait for a reply.

As he's passing by the ballroom, he remembers something that he read about never leaving a party without thanking the host. Hating the nagging voice in his head and his fear of missing out on an opportunity to connect with his boss, he re-enters the ballroom. He locates his boss quickly — there's no doubt that he knows how to stand out due to the numerous posters plastered around the office building—and he makes his way over to the man.

The conversation doesn't last long and Finnick's not sure if his boss even remembers his name, but what's done is done. He passes the doorman — not the judgmental one from earlier — and is once again hit with the brisk after-midnight air of New York City. He's waiting for a cab when a crack of thunder peals across the night sky. Finnick had forgotten about the storm during the haze of the party, and he swears when he remembers that even after he'd gone back inside, he'd failed to grab an umbrella.

He's huddling under the fancy awning—and great, now this doorman is judging him as well—and trying to hail a cab for at least ten minutes, but all his efforts are fruitless. He curses at every god he knows of for being stuck miles away from home and surrounded by cabbies unwilling to stop at this time of night and in this weather.

He's about to give up and go back inside to actually hire a cab when the doorman opens the doors and out steps the woman from the coat check room.

Almost effortlessly, it seems, she manages to convince one of the cabbies to pull over. She walks past Finnick and opens the cab door. Before she gets in, she turns back and yells, "Are you coming?" over the rain. Finnick looks back at the doorman, who looks like he's about done with Finnick's company, and runs to the gaudy yellow car.

The cab has only gone about a block from the hotel but Finnick already has his forehead pressed against the dirty glass. The rain is still torrential and he remembers long, rainy road trips with his parents and pretending that the rain drops were racing each other to the bottom of the window.

The longer he's stationary, the more he feels the effects of the alcohol. He's less able to distinguish each rain drop but what he thinks is a single droplet on the edge closest to the glass has just hit the rubber seal and dispersed when he feels a nudge on his shoulder.

"Annie," the voice says and it barely registers in his mind.

The second drop finishes the race before he responds. "Sorry, what did you say?"

"I told you that my name is Annie."

"Oh, okay." He presses his face back against the cool of the glass before he realizes he hasn't actually responded. He leans his back against the seat. "I'm Finnick."

"So, do you work for HS Abernathy?" the woman, Annie, is asking. Her body is angled to face him as much as the seatbelt will allow and Finnick is hit with everything that's been chasing him. He pinches the bridge of his nose and wills himself to sober up, to not ruin this before it's even started.

"Yeah, yeah, I do, actually. Recently hired from an internship." So, he's rambling just a little bit. "And you work for a coat check service?"

Annie laughs, a little dry and a little embarrassed. "Yeah, I guess I do. I'm in law school. At Columbia. It's my second year, and I need the money, so. . ."

"What a coincidence," Finnick says, finally shifting to face Annie, "I work in legal at Abernathy."

Annie crinkles her nose in response, and it's adorable. The action draws attention to the freckles splotched across her nose and Finnick's not sure if he's drunk or if her eyes are actually sparkling.

The storm is still raging on outside when the cab pulls up outside his building. Now that the conversation has lulled, Finnick's attention is brought to the echoing sound of the rain falling hard on the top of the car, and he's reminded, not without a little sadness, that he will definitely write off on the alcohol tomorrow, that he's the only one getting out of the cab here.

"Where do you live?"

"That's a little forward, don't you think?"

He can't tell if she's serious. He hopes she's not serious. "We are literally sitting outside of my apartment right now," he deadpans.

"Fair enough. I live about a block away."

Finnick scrambles until he can get around to his pocket. He pulls out his wallet. He starts to hand his debit card to the driver when Annie grabs his wrist. "What are you doing?"

"I'm. . . paying for the ride?"

"No, you're not. I hailed the cab."

Finnick stares at her for a few moments, studying her. He's now very aware that the meter is running.

"Besides, you can get the next one?"

Finnick's trying to decide if she's saying what he thinks she's saying when Annie shoves a piece of paper into his hand and reaches over him to open the door .

When he steps out of the cab, he's immediately surrounded by rain and he doesn't think twice before he darts for the safety of his building. Annie had said something as he pushed the door shut and he's almost certain it was, "Call me!"

Finnick watches the cab go around the corner with a large, goofy smile plastered on his face. He doesn't even mind that he stepped in another one of those godforsaken potholes for the second time that night. He steps inside the relative dryness of the building and reaches into his pocket so he can add Annie's number to his contacts for later use.

His smile falls when he pulls the paper out of his pocket and all the ink has smeared from exposure to rain. Finnick thinks he can make out a five, possibly, but he's not completely sure of any of the digits. The only thing he is sure of is that Annie had drawn a tiny heart in the corner of the paper.

Appendix N, "This Friday Night"This Friday Night by sponsormusings reviews

Katniss Everdeen was just out to get drunk; to celebrate, not commiserate. But after a few cocktails and a little encouragement, she can't help but do both anyway... A submission for Prompts in Panem March/April 2015, Day 2.

Rated: T - English - Romance/Humor - Chapters: 1 - Words: 2,520 - Reviews: 10 - Favs: 34 - Follows: 30 - Published: Mar 31 - Katniss E., Peeta M. - Complete

In the end, she knew she'd known better from almost the very beginning; that for far too long she'd actively ignored the voice that had been telling her to cut her losses, to finish it, to kick him to the curb. She still wasn't entirely sure why she hadn't listened - likely stubbornness or displeasure at upsetting the delicate balance of friendship, though most probably it had been the idea that if she was in a relationship, people would stop incessantly trying to set her up on dates. Which, if she was perfectly honest, was exactly the reason why she'd ended up dating her neighbours' brother in the first place.

Ultimately, though, when even the idea of a date with her co-worker's stamp collecting still-living-at-home son had seemed more appealing than continuing to date Cato Anderson, she'd cut it off, albeit three months later than she should have. He was officially the biggest douchebag she'd ever met in her life, and in sucking down the rest of the ridiculously overpriced cocktail she'd ordered on a whim, Katniss Everdeen toasted herself for finally paying attention to the warning signs.

"I'll take another, Haymitch," she demanded once it was empty, tipping her head at the bartender. He lifted an eyebrow wryly. "You ever heard of please?"

Katniss scowled at him; a man in his mid-forties, with scruffy black hair edging towards salt and pepper, and a permanent look of vague disinterest on his face. It was probably that - his general not-give-a-shit demeanour - that had made her a regular at The Seam since she'd moved to Panem the year before. He kind of felt like a kindred spirit. "You really want to speak to me about pleasantries, old man?"

He laughed, a sound that landed somewhere between a bark and a cough, and leant an elbow on the bartop. "Got me there, sweetheart. But you sure you want another of those? They don't call them a Firecracker for nothing."

"I'm sure," she said firmly.

"Alright then," he sighed, throwing the dishcloth he held over his shoulder. "Just don't throw up all over my damn toilet whenever you're inevitably hanging over it later."

"Yeah, yeah, drink," Katniss said, pointing towards the shelves of alcohol, then reached into her pocket as she felt her phone buzz. Finnick (sent 6.32pm): I just dropped by - you're not at home. You'd better not be wallowing over that asshole.

Katniss (sent 6:35pm): Hardly. I'm out drinking.

Finnick (sent 6:36pm): Not commiserating?

Katniss (sent 6:37pm): Nope. Celebrating.

Finnick (sent 6:40pm): Good. Want some company?

Katniss (sent 6:42pm): Nah, I'm okay. Go spend the night with Annie.

She pocketed her phone, pleased when she looked up to see her drink prepared and already waiting for her. But, she realised in immediate frustration, not as pleased to see that the seat beside her had been taken, now occupied by some preppy looking guy in a suit with perfectly rumpled blond hair, and his fingers drumming a familiar rhythm on the bar top.

All the free seats in the bar, and he had to pick that one.

Shifting and angling her body so that it was obvious she wasn't interested in small talk, Katniss sucked on the straw eagerly, mentally ticking off a list of things she'd never, ever have to do again now that she wasn't with Cato. She'd never have to go to TGI Friday's, never have to watch those shitty no-brainer comedies that he loved and she hated, never have to pretend to like his idiot friends. That alone deserved a bucket full of cocktails, because those guys had rated about an 18 on the dudebro scale of 1 to 10.

"So is that any good?"

Katniss reluctantly slid her gaze to the right, towards the voice belonging to the blond man beside her, and shrugged. "It's doing the job I want it to." "Which is?"

She ran her tongue across the front of her teeth. "Getting me drunk."

Suit laughed, turning slightly on the stool to look at her more directly - and she immediately hated him for doing so. Because he was hot - like really hot. And she wasn't here to talk to cute guys. She was here to get sorta drunk and celebrate about getting rid of one. "Well, if that's what they're good for, then maybe I should have one too."

"If you want to," she replied noncommittally, hunching herself over her glass so she wasn't tempted to look at him again. "I'll have one of those, Haymitch," he piped up.

"Sure. Haven't seen you in a while."

"Why, miss me?"

"You spend money here, kid, so my bottom line does." There was an awkward beat of silence, and Katniss had to fight the curiosity to glance back up at him.

"Work's just been busy, that's all," he finally murmured.

"Boring."

"Yeah, I know."

Neither of them said anything more, and she heard, rather than saw, Haymitch move down the other end of the bar and begin trading insults with one of the other servers. The names they called each other alone were enough to make her feel like laughing out loud, and even though she didn't, she still grinned to herself stupidly. And because grinning stupidly meant the alcohol was finally starting to thrum in her blood, she was happy. It was exactly what she'd been aiming for.

She sipped at the last of her drink, then leant backwards slightly, arching and stretching her back as she glanced around her at the half-full bar. It was a mix of groups of people enjoying post-work drinks and couples cosily huddled together in booths before they inevitably moved along to somewhere else fancier and a shitload dearer. And looking beside her, she noted in surprise that Suit was already three quarters of the way through his drink.

"Good choice," he approved when he caught her eye.

"It's alright, I guess. I just think Haymitch enjoys the idea of burning peoples insides with alcohol."

He laughed, revealing two rows of straight white teeth, and a smile that quirked up slightly more on the left than the right. Her stomach flipped crazily, with what she was worried was more than just the cocktails. "So what's got you in here on this Friday night needing alcohol to do a job? Work?" he asked conversationally, reaching up to loosen the tie that was around his neck.

Katniss grimaced. Great. She hadn't intended to encourage him to start a proper conversation. "Guy trouble," she said simply, hoping it would put him off. She didn't need cute and funny right now.

"Same," he sighed in response, and Katniss looked up in surprise, only to have him laugh again. "I'm kidding. Well...it's a guy who led me to need a drink, but I don't think in the same way as you."

She screwed her nose up. "That's a bit presumptuous, don't you think?"

He lifted an eyebrow. "So your guy trouble stole your work and claimed credit for it?"

Huh. He had her there, she supposed. "No."

"Then there you go. Is it an ex of yours?"

She eyed him again warily. "I'm not buzzed enough to talk about it."

"Then let's have another," he said simply, lifted his hand towards Haymitch. "I heard once that venting can be a good thing."

"Where, on Dr Phil?" She snorted.

"Nah, the Internet," he countered with a grin.

Another drink later, she was on the teetering around the first edge of drunk, the stage where she knew her tongue was a little bit looser and her reluctance to open up slipped away.

"So he was an asshole," she announced abruptly.

"Who?" By now, Suit had slipped a pair of black framed glasses on, and Katniss was finding it hard to look at him. His attractiveness factor had blown through the roof the moment he'd put them on, tugged his jacket off and rolled up his shirtsleeves. Good God.

"Cato. The reason why I'm here," she told him with a roll of her eyes. "He was an asshole. I thought I had a pretty good bullshit barometer, you know."

"But you don't?" he blinked, once, twice, three times, and even behind his glasses she could see the long, blonde lashes tangle up. She was pretty sure her best friend would kill for those lashes.

"I do," Katniss said emphatically. "But it mustn't have worked with him."

"Why not?"

"Because he was cheating. Pretty much the whole 4 months we were together, and I had no clue. And now he's preparing to be a dad." "He got another girl pregnant?" Suit's eyes widened. "Shit, that sucks."

Katniss waved a hand in an attempt to look dismissive, but instead just managed to make it appear like she was playing over-exaggerated charades. "I don't care about that. Well, I do, but not because I care about him. I shouldn't have stayed with him as long as I did, because towards the end I didn't even particularly like him. It's that whole 'not being honest' that's pissed me off. The sneaking around."

He nodded in sympathy. "I know, that's why I'm here too. I've been working on this proposal at work for months. Stupid long hours, lots of research, just about ready to present it to my bosses. And my co-worker swooped in, stole my idea, presented it to the head honchos and voila! Immediate promotion for him, stuck in no man's land for me."

Katniss screwed her nose up. "Seriously? But can't you do anything about that? Prove it's yours?"

He ran a hand through his hair, sending the blond waves into a disordered mess, before resting his elbow on the bar, dropping his chin into his upturned palm. His sigh was long and low and deep and Katniss winced. Not because it was a bad sound - far from it - but because she had to squeeze her thighs together to alleviate the tension that had settled low in her core. Say no to suits, Katniss. Say no to suits. "Nah, trust me, it wouldn't get me anywhere. The Managing Director is this guy's uncle. Nothing he does is wrong, nothing

I do is right. Somehow, no evidence I would provide that it was mine would be good enough."

"Then it sounds to me like you need a new job."

He nodded despondently in agreement. "Yeah, you're right. It's just hard finding good graphic design gigs, you know. And they were a good company to work for, otherwise."

"Still not worth it," Katniss told him. She pushed her straw into her glass, rattled the ice around. "I wish I'd listened when my instincts told me Cato wasn't worth it."

"I thought you said your bullshit barometer had been off?"

"Yeah, well...The warning signs were there, they just didn't scream at me that he was out banging other chicks."

He chuckled. "It's not something I guess you want to think about having to worry about, right?" He lifted his glass to his lips, finished the last of his drink.

"Been there, done that too."

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"Gotten a girl pregnant while cheating on another?"

Suit lifted his hand to his chest, his face contorting in a mock grimace. "Ahhhh, that hurts. Didn't think I looked like the kind of guy who'd do that."

"They rarely do," Katniss pointed out.

"Humph," he replied, lowering his hand back to the bar. He traced patterns on the wood with his finger, drawing the condensation around. "Well, regardless, no - I got cheated on a few months ago. But in the end, it worked out for the better."

"It normally does," she agreed. "But sorry for the cheating thing, and the work. Your year has been shit. Betrayed all over the damn place." "Pretty much," he lifted his glass in a mock toast. "Here's to us and our shitty year, right?"

They clinked glasses, and whether it was intentional or not, she didn't know. But more of their hands clinked than the glasses themselves, and Katniss was shocked at the bolt of electricity that shot down her arm. Which was stupid, because stupid things like that only happened in stupid movies. Right?

Right?

They stared at each other for a moment, before Suit coughed lightly, looked back down at the bar. "Uh, want another?"

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"Why not?" Katniss said, her face flushed from alcohol, and absolutely nothing else. Definitely nothing else. She glanced away, her eye catching the time clock on the wall. "It's pretty late though; shouldn't you be going home soon to your girlfriend?"

The moment the words were out of her mouth, she wanted to facepalm, wanted to sink into the ground and let it swallow her up. She couldn't believe she was fishing. And so obviously too. She never fished, ever.

Maybe she was drunker than she thought.

He smiled, pushed his glasses back up his nose. "Nah, no girlfriend, so I can stay out as long as I like."

The words were like vomit, and she couldn't keep them back. "But I thought you said being cheated on worked out for the better?"

"Oh it did," he assured her, turning to call out their drink order to Haymitch before twisting back to her. "It means that rather than being at home tonight, I'm here. Drinking what very well could be paint stripper, and talking to you."

She rolled her eyes. "Wow. Do you try that on every buzzed girl in every bar?"

"Nope," he shook his head, glanced over at her through those glasses, and under those long, stupid lashes. And when he spoke next, his voice was low, almost throaty. "Never."

Oh.

They sat in silence for a moment, until Haymitch slammed their glasses on the bar - they both looked up in surprise to see him scowling down at them. He pointed dismissively, first at her, then Suit. "She's Katniss. He's Peeta. Drink these, then go and frigging flirt somewhere else. I don't want to see this shit," he grumbled before stalking off.

Suit - Peeta? - chuckled nervously, while she stared down at the bar, horrified. Flirting? She was going to kill Haymitch.

But when she glanced up again, Peeta was looking at her calmly, his blue eyes dancing with amusement. "Well, I can't say much for his technique, but I have to give him points. It's nice to meet you Katniss." He held out a hand, and she paused for a moment before tentatively reaching out her own, sliding her palm into his.

"It's nice to meet you too, Peeta."

Appendix O, “Valentine’s Day Angst”

Valentine's Day Angst by MaryAnn1819 reviews

Katniss thinks Valentine's Day is stupid holiday, but she still wants to know who Gale's bringing to the dance. For the Round 1 Day 7 prompt of Prompting Everthorne.

Rated: T - English - Romance - Chapters: 1 - Words: 2,010 - Reviews: 14 - Favs: 13 - Follows: 3 - Published: Mar 5 - [Gale H., Katniss E.] - Complete

Valentine's Day was the most idiotic holiday Katniss could imagine, especially in District 12. It was an extravagant celebration of everything people couldn't really afford to have. She would have expected Gale to understand her position on the subject, but when she told him, he just chuckled.

"I didn't know love was so expensive."

He went to loosen an animal from one of his snares, still smiling like her opinion was just silly.

"It is if you have to buy stuff for each other, and get all dressed up, and then go to some stupid dance."

"Also didn't know dancing was so expensive," he smirks at her. "I guess that's where my money goes, squandered away at Seam dances each month."

Katniss rolls her eyes.

"It's not the dancing or the love. It's the way people do them on Valentine's Day," she says. "It's not enough to just show up at the Seam and dance. Instead, you have to ask a date with some big, expensive gesture."

"I never do anything expensive for the girls I ask."

Gale plops a squirrel in his game bag and studies the snare to see how best to reset it.

"Well..." Katniss trails off. She feels strange telling Gale he's so attractive he doesn't have to do anything expensive. Girls are more than happy to accept the cranberries he gives them in lieu of a pricey trinket.

"Most people do something expensive," she says, deciding that's a safe enough answer. "And a lot of the girls try and get new clothes, or at least buy some ribbon for their hair. So, it's not just dancing and falling in love. No one needs a holiday for that anyway, people do it all the time."

"You don't." Gale looks up from his snare and meets her eyes.

Katniss looks away and shrugs, struggling for the words to explain that falling in love is a luxury she can't afford, and not just in a monetary sense. "Love is...distracting. And it leads to trouble."

Gale rolls his eyes and starts walking towards the next snare.

"A little distraction never killed anyone."

Katniss isn't so sure about that, but she says nothing and follows him downstream towards the next snare. He glances back over his shoulder at her. "I'm still alive, aren't I?"

"You don't fall in love," Katniss tells him. "You just have sex. It's not the same."

Gale stops and turns to gape at her.

"I...that..."

He rubs the back of his neck and winces at her.

"Don't sugar coat it or anything, Catnip."

"Am I wrong?"

For a moment he looks intently at her, then he shakes his head and sighs.

"Sort of," he says at last.

"So you actually fell in love with those girls?"

"No...with someone else."

She's never seen Gale look so uncertain before. He bites on his lower lip and opens his mouth like he's going to continue, but can't seem to find the words. It occurs to Katniss that he may not want to share this part of his life with her, and she feels horribly guilty. She shouldn't have even brought up Valentine's Day and she definitely shouldn't have said anything about Gale's sex life.

"Forget it. All this stuff is stupid anyway."

She brushes past him and goes to look at his snare. A few seconds pass before she hears him move to join her. She can tell he's watching her carefully, so she does her best to look focused on the snare ahead.

"Nothing in this one," she says.

"I think it's time to move it; it's been empty the last few weeks."

Gale moves past her to begin carefully taking apart the snare. When he's done, she points out some animal tracks further down stream and they head over to study them. Gale squints intently and follows tracks to the edge of the water, deciding the best place to set the snare.

Katniss watches him work and tries not to keep thinking about Gale falling in love with someone. For some reason it bothers her more than the thought of him taking girls to the slagheap. To see him get so nervous talking about a girl makes Katniss think he must be really invested in this girl, whoever she is. That he really cares about her, probably more than he even cares about Katniss.

The urge to ask who she is is overwhelming, but Katniss manages to resist it as they finish checking the snare line and return back to the fence and into the district. Of course that doesn't mean Katniss stops thinking about it. She tries to recall all the girls she knows at school, the ones her age, the ones Gale's age, and even ones a few years older. Maybe Gale does like an older woman. She thinks she remembers a rumor that he took a girl two years older than him to the slag heap.

Ultimately, she spends the whole walk home thinking about it and still has no real answer, just a series of educated guesses. She supposes she'll find out when he asks the girl to the Valentine's Day dance.

But the days go by, it gets steadily closer to Valentine's Day, and Gale still hasn't asked anyone to the dance. At this point, Katniss isn't the only one thinking about it. The gossip mill at school is buzzing with speculation about who he's going to ask and why he hasn't asked anyone yet. A few girls even comes up to Katniss and ask her if Gale's taking her to the Valentine's Day dance. She doesn't appreciate the question, not just because it's none of their business, but also because it gets her to wondering what it would be like if she and Gale went to the dance together. What would it feel like to dance with him? Would he kiss her? That thought makes her cheeks burn and forces Katniss to come to the unwelcome conclusion that she sort of, maybe, wants Gale to kiss her.

The whole thing is just a disaster and Katniss can't bear it anymore. Gale needs to just ask this girl and get it over with so she can move on with her life. "You need to hurry up and ask someone to the Valentine's Day dance," she tells him as they trudge back to the fence after hunting.

Gale gapes at her and she feels the need to explain.

"Girls keep coming up to me and asking me about it."

"Sorry," he says. "I just don't know if I'm going to ask anyone."

That surprises Katniss and she frowns at him.

"Why don't you ask that girl you're in love with?"

Gale looks startled for a moment, and then looks away, nervous again. Katniss is starting to hate this girl. Nothing else has ever made Gale act this strange around her.

"I'm not sure she'd want to go with me," Gale says at last.

"Of course she will. Everyone does."

"She's different. I'm not sure if she even wants to go to the dance." Katniss frowns. Maybe she'll end up liking this girl in spite of herself. "Well...then, why don't you ask her?"

Gale opens his mouth to object.

"No, I don't mean the normal way where she basically has to say yes or turn you down in front of the whole school." Katniss would hardly blame the girl if she didn't want that. "I mean talk to her on her own, tell her you know she may not want to go to the dance, but you really like her and would like to take her, or at least do something with her."

Gale studies her carefully and then nods.

"I'll give that some thought."

"Well not too much thought. You need to hurry up and handle this." Gale chuckles.

"I'll see what I can do. But I can't rush this one. It's too important."

That makes Katniss's stomach twist uncomfortably. She knows she shouldn't hate this girl just because Gale thinks she's important. She does sound like she might have a shred of common sense. But if things keep going like this, this girl is going to take Katniss's place as the most important girl in Gale's life besides his mother and Posy. And Katniss knows it's not fair of her to guard that place so jealously, after all, Gale was bound to find a wife at some point, but she's just not ready to give her position up. And she's not sure she ever will be.

The next morning, Gale is not at their spot when Katniss arrives to hunt. She tries not to feel too bothered by this, but he usually arrives a bit before her. She sits on their rock to wait, growing progressively more impatient as the minutes tick by. Finally she sees Gale brush past a tree and make his way towards her.

"You're late," she tells him. He swallows and she notices something seems wrong with him today. She can't quite explain it, but he seems nervous again. "I...I want to talk to you about something."

Now Katniss is nervous, terrified in fact. Gale has never done something like this before and it makes her wonder if something has happened.

"It's nothing bad," he says, quickly seeing her face. "At least I hope not. I really, really hope not."

He swallows.

"So, so the thing is. I-uhm-I know you..." he takes an exasperated breath, gives his head a shake, and then swallows once more. "I know you may not want to go to the Valentine's Day dance, but I-I really like you. And I would like to take you or-or at least do something with you. Take you on some kind of date or...I mean, if you want. If not-" "Wait," Katniss's brain has finally caught up with the reality of the situation. "You mean-you mean it's me? The girl you like is me?"

Gale swallows again and nods.

"I spent all this time worrying that you were going to fall in love with someone else and replace me and-

She doesn't get another word out because Gale has cupped her face in his hands and brought his lips down to her own. The feeling of his lips gently pressing on her own vanishes all thought from her mind. When he pulls away he keeps her face close to his, smiling down at her.

"You were worried?"

She tries to think of a clever reply, but her lips are still tingling and she feels light and happy.

"Shush."

Gale chuckles and pulls her into another kiss. This one is deeper. Her mouth opens and his tongue teases hers. One of his hands drops to her waist pressing her body closer to his.

When they pull away, Katniss feels herself breathing more quickly and notices her hands pressing into Gale's chest. He drops his mouth close to her ear and whispers,

"So are you going to come to the dance with me?" Katniss smiles, feeling the brush creep up her cheeks. "Or we can always just come back out here." Katniss thinks she might like that idea even better.

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