

Find Back To Me

Everlark

Von Toast

Kapitel 2: A cruel gift

Hi there, here's the second chapter :-) I am SO happy that I finished it, because the story will start from now on.

Chapter 2: A cruel gift

„Where is she? " I yelled as I grabbed Finnick by the scruff of his neck. "What have they done to her?"

Finnick tried to stay as calm as possible. He shook his head again.

"I told you we don't know. They are interrogating Johanna right now. I am not sure if she knows anything. I heard she looks horrible and no one actually cares to bring her to the hospital. They don't let her go until they know about Katniss' whereabouts. You can be sure they are doing everything in their power to save her."

I released him. It wasn't his fault at all. I was desperate and took it out on him. I felt helpless.

"Try to cheer up a little, boy" the tanned guy said. "At least they didn't torture her till death in that cell like the Avoxes. Johanna would have known. Their cells were next to each other the first days. She might be okay, still."

His words didn't comfort me at all. How could they have? I left Finnick where he stood when he finished telling me everything he knew. I couldn't stand company now and I just wanted to be alone. I wanted to hide myself crawl in a dark hole.

Why did I left her back in the arena? Why couldn't I go with her? Everything was my fault. If I had stayed by her side, we wouldn't have been separated.

'If anything happened to Katniss, I wouldn't be able survive. I know.'

I ran to my room. For the first time, I threw myself into the bed and cried like a little

child. I didn't feel ashamed of it. I just let all the frustration I had held back those weeks out, and I couldn't say how long I was sobbing against my pillow. When I stopped and felt, that no tears were flowing out of me anymore, I felt hollow and deadly wounded. The only thing I could do was sleep. And wait. And be sure to keep breathing.

'She won't be dead, right? She was just sent somewhere else' I hoped, and with this thoughts and her name on my lips, I drifted in a long, dreamless sleep.

When I got up again, I was surprised a little. For a second I didn't know where I was. The room was so unfamiliar. But it was my room, obviously.

My eyes were swollen badly.

'Peeta, you are such a kid.'

After I checked on my plans today, I went to eat some breakfast. I got some strange white bread, without any taste and red beans. I didn't like it at all, though I was not sure if it was because it really tasted bad or if I just wasn't able to enjoy anything. I found out that it was the latter. I couldn't enjoy anything anymore, I just felt numb and didn't know how to get out of this misery. The only effective medicine for me would have been Katniss. I knew.

Half a week passed, until I met my old mentor in front of the command center. He got news for me, he said. But he looked so awful that I realized immediately, that the news could not be good ones. No, awful wasn't even the right word for it: He looked like a piece of shit. And his stench wasn't better at all.

"They might've found her!" Haymitch yelled at me, as he grabbed my shoulders and I knew that he only did it as he tried not to fall over. His face looked terrible and his breath stank barbarous. I had to pull myself together to keep eye-contact. "...Not ssure yet though."

It was not the time to lecture him about his drinking behavior. I grabbed him, as he held on me, and shook him slightly.

"Where?" I asked him desperate, not even able to take a single breath (Which was better anyway, Haymitch smelled beyond belief).

"One of our account execut-...", he started and suddenly started to choke. It turned out to be a bad idea to shake him. I jumped away just on time, when he started vomiting over his own shirt and I realized that it was impossible to interact with him. I called for help and after few seconds, Haymitch was taken to the next hospital room to sober up. I managed to worry about him a little, since he even looked worse than he did, when we were reaped for the first time. Haymitch fell of the stage which didn't help him to improve his reputation.

I rushed to Finnick's side. Within District 13, he was my closest ally and he might have been the only one I could rely on.

"Finnick, tell me what happened. Please!", I begged him. He wrinkled his nose when he saw the stains of Haymitch's barf on my left pant leg. I haven't realized it because I couldn't feel the fluid on my skin - since there was no skin anymore. Now it was my turn to look disgusted.

"Haymitch", I declared shortly and the former tribute of District 4 simply nodded . He got the picture.

"District 13 infiltrated the capitol", he began and led me towards my room. "We got news from one of our men. " He said as we were walking.

"We were told that ... a train had left from the capitol early this morning."

First I didn't get what he wanted to tell me.

"A train" It didn't sound like a question.

"Yeah."

"Is she... is she on it?" I gasped. I was not able to myself anymore. "Tell me already!"

"We don't know... okay? I heard that they shipped something. A bed or a ... box or something."

Finnick knew more than me. As he spoke, he wondered how long it would take me to understand.

"Where is it.. where is it headed?" I began to stutter, having a dark premonition. But I didn't get any answer.

I swallowed hard.

"Where?", I repeated with fear but also anger in my voice. 'Come on, it's like pulling teeth!'" I thought.

"That's the point Peeta. The train will arrive in District 12 - or it's ruins – in less than an hour."

"Why?" I asked. "Why is the Capitol going there? What are they sending to..."

My heart stopped as realization stroke me hard.

"They wont!" I cried. "They wouldn't!"

Again, Finnick didn't give me an answer.

"A coffin! They will send us her dead body, Finnick!"

Finnick inhaled sharply. He had thought of this, too..

"It is possible." he said, his voice strangely calm. When he saw my shocked face, he wasn't sure how to react. If I was Annie, he would have hugged me until I calmed down or would have rocked me slowly back and forth in his arms until I would have fallen asleep.

But of course, I was not Annie. In addition, I wasn't even a girl. The man in front of me didn't know what to do, since he certainly is good with women and only women.

He simply pressed his palm against my shoulder and squeezed. It helped me not even a bit, but it still felt better than nothing at all.

"We will leave for 12 in about fifteen minutes", he said, when we stepped back into my room. I couldn't even remember how we actually got there. "Care to join us?" he asked concerned.

"Yes" I answered defeated, my face pale and my hands sweaty. "Thank you."

Finnick nodded. His offer was the only thing he could give me. He knew, If he was in my place, he would want to go too.

"Do I have a minute? I want to change my clothes. I don't want to smell like Haymitch."

"Yea, but hurry up."

I changed really fast, thoughtless, as If I were a machine. I didn't want to think anymore. Because every time I did, I found myself imagine the picture of Katniss motionless corpse. Tears filled my eyes.

'No, it's not true. I know.' I tried to tell myself. 'Everything will be alright. She will be alright. She must be.'

A few minutes later our hovercraft started, headed for District 12. We never talked. I never looked outside once. I didn't want to see the changing landscape, because I knew, starting at one certain point, that there would only destruction be waiting for me. The place I once called home. Burnt to ashes.

"We will soon arrive. Please prepare your weapons and check your equipment again." I heard the aviator through the inter phone. "Please fasten your seatbelts. We might get some turbulence."

As if I cared, I thought. I just wanted to get out of this floating something and face the facts. Not even knowing what had happened to her is even scarier than seeing it with my own eyes. If I saw her dead body, at least, I could accept it. But just see it in my imagination was something that made me break beyond repair.

We landed soon after this announcement. I was happy to know that Finnick stayed by my side, the one ally I trusted the most in the arena. And of course, he was a good replacement for Haymitch who was... indisposed.

The train came into our sight; it already had stopped before reaching the destroyed railway station of District 12. I couldn't look at the burnt and destroyed buildings anyway, and even if I wanted to go and check on my bakery, I could not pick up the courage to do so. I didn't even want to risk to catch a glimpse of it.

One dead body for today would be enough.

I mustn't think like that. But I did anyway.

The distance to the halted train decreased. We were especially careful; since we didn't know what traps could have been set by the capitol. As we drew nearer nothing happened, what surprised us more than enough. It was as if the capitol wanted us to see, to risk a glance inside. To welcome us.

As if they wanted to send us a present.

And they did.

It was Katniss.

When I opened the door to the room, where we had been sleeping next to each other in the tour of victors, I found her body. She was placed in the bed, our bed, covered with odorous, white roses. Next to her was something, that resembled a coffin, filled with bloody red roses with incredibly long stems. The girl looked like she was sleeping, peaceful and free, but scarred all over her white, thin and lifeless body. Her olive skin had never been this pale before...

She wore the mockingjay dress that Cinna had designed for her, but most of the feathers were torn, and I found a red ribbon around her neck. The kind of ribbon you would tie around a present.

I fell to my knees. This couldn't be real, right? This was one of those dreams, those nightmares I would always have in the night, right before waking up in Katniss' consoling arms.

No. This wasn't real. It couldn't be. But I was too scared to stand up and check, if there really was no heartbeat to be found anymore. The capitol won over us. Over me.

I called out her name, nothing more than a silent and desperate whimper, not fighting against the tears anymore, when something strange happened. Something in the room actually *moved*. I lifted my head in her direction to check if I just had imagined things. I hadn't. Katniss sat straight in her bed and gave me a bewildered look.

"Katniss!", I yelled, as I got such a start that I wasn't able to think clearly. She didn't say anything and had a kind of foreign and dull expression in her eyes as she got up and moved towards me. She looked insecure but her eyes were never leaving mine as she walked. I jumped on my feet and opened my arms to embrace her tightly when I reached her. I was literally crying my ass out. And I didn't care about it.

"Katniss, I thought you were... you were..", I whispered choking.

"I was waiting for you", she said. Her voice sounded hollow and her hands were trembling nervously, but she was Katniss, without a doubt. My Katniss. Alive and save now.

"I missed you so much."

My heart jumped.

"I missed you even more than you could ever imagine, Katniss." I answered truthfully, as I held her tight, and when I felt her breath fondle my ear, I was a goner.

"Yeah...", she sighed.

And then she slowly raised a knife behind my back.

The story starts from here.. poor Peeta. I already feel sorry for him.