

The Hunger Games



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF SUZANNE COLLINS

Suzanne Collins's father was a U.S. Air Force officer, and her family moved frequently when she was a child, spending time in the eastern United States as well as parts of Europe. Because of her father's military experience, it was important to him that his children understood war—not just where battles took place, but why and how they played out. Eventually, Collins attended Indiana University and earned a degree in theater and telecommunications. After a few years, Collins went back to school to earn a playwriting degree from New York University, and shortly after graduation, she began writing for television. Collins wrote for several Nickelodeon shows, Scholastic Entertainment, and Kids' WB, and she was eventually inspired to try writing a children's book series. The result was *The Underland Chronicles*. A few years later, Collins was watching television, switching between channels covering reality TV and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—and that's when she came up with the idea for *The Hunger Games*. Collins followed *The Hunger Games* with additional best-sellers in the series—[Catching Fire](#) and [Mockingjay](#)—both of which were bestsellers.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Suzanne Collins came up with the idea of *The Hunger Games* while watching news coverage of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The depictions of these wars, when combined with the popularity of reality TV, and the ways in which coverage of the wars seemed itself to be a kind of reality TV, led Collins to imagine the dystopian setting of Panem, where violence becomes a major form of entertainment. Around the time Collins was writing *The Hunger Games*, the world was also seeing the beginnings of the ongoing global recession, emphasizing the wealth gap and the conditions of poverty both within the United States and abroad.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Suzanne Collins drew from the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur when coming up with the idea of tributes for the Hunger Games. *The Hunger Games* has also been compared to the popular Japanese novel-turned-film, *Battle Royale*, in which junior high school students are forced to fight to the death in a program led by an authoritarian Japanese government.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Hunger Games*

- **When Written:** mid-to-late 2000s
- **Where Written:** Connecticut, United States
- **When Published:** September 2008
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Dystopian fiction; Young Adult fiction
- **Setting:** Fictional dystopia known as Panem, created after the governments of North America collapsed
- **Climax:** When Peeta and Katniss threaten to eat the poisoned berries rather than kill one another to win the Hunger Games
- **Antagonist:** President Snow, the Peacekeepers, those who watch the Hunger Games in the Capitol
- **Point of View:** First person, Katniss's perspective

EXTRA CREDIT

Breaking Records. Shortly after publication, *The Hunger Games* appeared on both *The New York Times* Best Seller list and *USA Today's* best-sellers list, where it remained for over a hundred weeks. In 2012, Amazon also announced that Suzanne Collins had become the best-selling Kindle author of all time.

Parental Guidance Suggested. The American Library Association listed *The Hunger Games* as the third most challenged book of 2010, citing excessive violence and sexual content unsuited to the age group.



PLOT SUMMARY

When Katniss wakes up on Prim's first reaping day, she heads to the woods to hunt with Gale, her best friend and hunting partner. She brings home a feast that will serve as a celebratory dinner after the reaping.

At the reaping, the mayor reads a speech about the history of the Hunger Games. The Hunger Games are meant as a punishment for the districts that once rebelled against the Capitol. As punishment, one girl and one boy are taken from each of the twelve districts every year and forced to fight to the death until there is only one winner left.

To Katniss's shock, Prim's name is called despite the odds against it as the female tribute for District 12. Before Prim can mount the stage, however, Katniss rushes out and volunteers in her place. Peeta Mellark is called as the male tribute, and Katniss is upset because she's indebted to Peeta from years ago. When Katniss's father died in a mining accident, Peeta for some reason snuck some bread to her, and this generosity prevented her family from starving.

When it's time to say goodbye to her family, Katniss promises Prim that she will try hard to win the Games and return. Peeta's father, the mayor's daughter Madge, and Gale also come to say goodbye. Madge gives Katniss a **mockingjay** pin to wear in the arena.

Katniss and Peeta take a train to the Capitol, amazed by the luxury of their compartments. They team up to get Haymitch, their drunken mentor, to stay sober enough to give them advice.

When Katniss arrives at the Capitol, she's surprised by how normal-looking her stylist, Cinna, is, in comparison to the other very "artificial" citizens of the Capitol. He designs a remarkable costume made out of fake flames for Katniss to wear in the opening ceremony.

The day before they enter the arena, Peeta confesses his love for Katniss in a nationally televised interview, and Katniss angrily believes that it's all part of his strategy to win the Games.

When they enter the arena the next day, Katniss is able to survive in the woods fairly easily, but soon the Gamemakers engineer a number of obstacles to bring the competitors together. First, a wall of fire drives everyone away from the edge of the arena, and then a series of fireballs target Katniss. One catches her on the calf, and she becomes badly burned.

When Katniss is cornered by the Career tributes (tributes from wealthier districts who have trained their whole life to compete in the Games) at the top of a tree, Rue helps her locate a tracker jacker nest, and Katniss sets it loose upon the Careers. However, Katniss also gets stung and begins hallucinating, and she vaguely remembers that Peeta—who had seemed to be allied with the Careers—put himself in danger and ends up saving her life and telling her to run.

Rue and Katniss team up, but their alliance is short-lived, as Rue is soon killed. Katniss weaves a wreath for Rue and sings to Rue in her last moments, and Rue's district—District 11—sends Katniss a loaf of **bread** in thanks.

The Gamemakers who run the Game announce that the rules have been changed so that there can be two winners from the same district, likely to ratchet up the tension of the Games for the viewing audience by getting Katniss to go and try to help Peeta, who was injured by Cato when he saved Katniss. And Katniss does immediately set off to find Peeta. After she finds him, badly injured and not far from death, Katniss realizes that Haymitch wants her to play up the romance for the audience, so she does so, while Peeta is happy just to be with her—he doesn't seem to be acting at all.

The Gamemakers announce that all remaining contestants can get something they badly need at the Cornucopia where the games began. Katniss is nearly killed by the career tribute Clover from District 2, but is saved by Thresh who then lets Katniss go to repay her for the kindness she showed to Rue (he

is from Rue's district). Thresh then runs off with his own package and Cato's. Katniss returns to Peeta with her package, which turns out to be medicine that soon returns him back to health.

Ultimately, Katniss, Peeta, and Cato are the last remaining tributes, and Katniss and Peeta gather at the lake to wait for Cato. However, all three are attacked by genetically altered wolf-creatures (who are in fact the revived and modified bodies of the other dead contestants), and there is a final confrontation on top of the golden horn of the Cornucopia in which Katniss shoots Cato in the hand and lets him fall off the Cornucopia where he is mauled by the wolf-creatures. Katniss puts him out of his misery with another arrow shot.

The Gamemakers then announce that they're revoking their last rule revision and that there can only be one winner. In desperation, Katniss comes up with a plan, giving Peeta and herself each a handful of poison berries that Peeta had accidentally gathered. On the count of three, they start to place the berries in their mouths, committing joint suicide, but the announcer stops them in a panic, announcing that they have both won the Hunger Games.

A few days later, after she and Peeta have recovered from their injuries in the Games, Haymitch informs Katniss that she's in danger because President Snow is not happy that she outsmarted and defied the Capitol. She must continue to pretend to be madly in love with Peeta—it's her only defense for her actions. Peeta learns that she's been pretending, however, and he grows distant, agreeing only to pretend for the cameras as they return to their lives back home.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Katniss Everdeen – Katniss is the sixteen-year-old protagonist of *The Hunger Games*, and the story is told from her perspective. She is fiercely protective of her family and practical, having learned to care for her mom and little sister, Prim, after their father died in a mining accident when Katniss was just eleven. She's described as having dark hair, olive skin, and gray eyes, like most of the others who live in the Seam of District 12. Katniss is tough, independent, resourceful, fiery, and skilled with a bow and arrow, and yet she also has a compassionate side and deep loyalty to those she loves. This combination of traits turns out to be dangerous for the Capitol and President Snow, as it inspires others and serves as a catalyst that creates bonds among people, including between districts, threatening the government's system of division and control.

Peeta Mellark – Peeta is the male tribute from District 12. He's quietly loved Katniss for years, and is willing to sacrifice himself for her. He grew up as the baker's son and is built with broad shoulders, accustomed to lifting heavy sacks of flour. Peeta's

love for Katniss makes him willing to defy the rules of the Hunger Games and threaten to commit a double suicide with Katniss, forcing the organizers of the Hunger Games to change the rules. In other words, his love of Katniss allows him to show, with Katniss, that the ruling Capitol can be defied.

Gale – Gale is Katniss’s hunting companion at home. He also lives in the Seam and is responsible for keeping his younger brothers from going hungry. Gale promises to look after Katniss’s family while she’s participating in the Games, and he is probably the person Katniss is most comfortable with when she’s in District 12. Gale is not exactly a love interest of Katniss’s in *The Hunger Games*, but she is confused about her feelings for him versus those she feels for Peeta.

Primrose Everdeen – Prim is Katniss’s little sister. With blonde hair and blue eyes—rare in their area of District 12—Prim is young, innocent, and not as strong or independent as Katniss. Katniss is fiercely protective of her. Against the odds, Prim’s name is picked at her first reaping when she’s twelve years old. Katniss volunteers to take her place in the Games.

Katniss’s mother – Katniss and Prim’s mother is from a wealthier merchant class within District 12, but she moved to the Seam to marry their father for love. When her husband dies in a mining accident, however, she falls into a daze, unable to work and take care of her children. As a result, Katniss is forced to grow up quickly to support the family and can never bring herself to fully trust her mother again.

Haymitch Abernathy – Haymitch is the only surviving winner of the Hunger Games from District 12, which makes him the mentor for Peeta and Katniss. He’s constantly drunk, only sobering up after Peeta and Katniss aggressively ask him to be a proper mentor. Nonetheless, Haymitch is also extremely smart and sly, and he and Katniss seem to be able to understand each other’s stratagems.

Cinna – Cinna is Katniss’s stylist for the games, earning her the nickname “girl on fire” with the costumes he designs. Cinna becomes Katniss’s friend, instructing her to be herself for the interviews. Unlike other residents of the Capitol, he seems to recognize the brutal and exploitative practices of the Capitol and to sympathize—or more—with the Districts.

Effie Trinket – Effie is the escort of the tributes from District 12, meaning she steers the tributes through the rituals of the Games. She wears a pink wig and speaks with the affected Capitol accent. Though she is very concerned with appearances and her own career—and has no self-consciousness about the Games or the political system—she comes to care personally for Peeta and Katniss.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Rue – Rue is the twelve-year-old female tribute from District 11. Small, young, and innocent, she reminds Katniss of Prim. She and Katniss become allies before she is killed in the Games.

In death, Katniss treats Rue with such respect that District 11 comes to support Katniss.

Thresh – Thresh is the male tribute from District 11. He shows mercy on Katniss at one point because he appreciates her kindness towards Rue.

Cato – Cato is the male tribute from District 2. He is a career tribute, meaning he’s trained for the Games his entire life. Strong and brutal, he’s the last one to survive other than Katniss and Peeta.

Clove – Clove is the female tribute from District 2. She is a career tribute, meaning she’s trained for the Games her entire life. She almost kills Katniss before Thresh interferes, killing her and saving Katniss.

Glimmer – Glimmer is the female tribute from District 1. She is very attractive, but dies from tracker jacker stings.

Foxface – Foxface is the female tribute from District 5. She is extremely sly and manages to survive until almost the very end by stealing food from the other tributes, but ultimately her own smarts trick her into eating poison berries Peeta had gathered without knowing they were dangerous.

Madge Undersee – Madge is the daughter of the mayor of District 12. She gives Katniss the **mockingjay** pin.

Caesar Flickerman – Caesar is a resident of the Capitol and the showy television host who interviews the contestants.

President Snow – The president of Panem, who is none too pleased when the Capitol’s control and power is faced down by Katniss and Peeta when they defy the rules of the Hunger Games and threaten to commit suicide rather than fight to the death.

Portia – A stylist, who works with Cinna to help create Katniss’s style for the Hunger Games.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



DIVISION AND CONTROL

Panem is a dictatorship ruled by President Snow and predicated on authoritarian control. President Snow maintains his control by sowing division among Panem’s people—divvying up the country into twelve districts—and ensuring their dependence upon the government. Each of the districts specializes in producing particular goods—and only those goods—and therefore relies on centralized distribution in order to survive, and this

dependence is further enforced through rules like the one against poaching, which prevents residents from augmenting their meager food supply (though this is a rule that Katniss routinely breaks with her hunting). The division among the different districts is embodied by the Hunger Games, a competition that pits residents of the districts against each other—and in doing so, makes the districts focus on their rivalries with each other while reinforcing the fact that the Capitol completely controls them.



LOVE, LOYALTY, AND COMPASSION

In the harsh environment of the Hunger Games, it is normal for tributes to form temporary “alliances” for strategic purposes, only to eventually kill their allies when the time comes. Yet though the Games turn tributes into brutal competitors who know only that they must kill or be killed, Katniss forms not alliances but *relationships*. First, she volunteers for the Games in place of her little sister, Prim. Because District 12 has a history of losing the Games, Katniss is essentially volunteering for a death sentence, showing that she cares more about her little sister’s life than her own—a revelation that immediately draws the attention of those in the Capitol, who aren’t used to seeing the inhabitants of the districts sacrifice for one another. Next, she breaks from common practice of tributes when she teams up with Rue, the smallest of the tributes, and tries to protect her despite the nature of the Games. This, in turn, prompts Thresh, a competitor from Rue’s district, to show mercy on Katniss.

Katniss certainly employs strategy in winning the games, but by treating her sister and at least some of the other tributes as people worthy of love and care, Katniss, in a sense, breaks the Games. Once she has created these relationships of caring, the logic shifts from how to kill each other to how to beat the Games themselves, which translates directly into beating the Capitol at its own game. This effort comes to a head in the last moment of the Hunger Games, when Katniss’s relationship with Peeta—a relationship founded on the love Katniss inspires in Peeta; and on Katniss’s own willingness to kill herself rather than kill Peeta—finally breaks down the structure of the Games. By preparing to eat the poisoned berries, Katniss and Peeta demonstrate that they are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for one another, and this tragically noble display shows that there’s undeniably more to them than just bloodlust and survival instinct—their loyalty forces the Gamemakers to change the rules. And because the government gathers strength by dividing up its residents and pitting them against each other, the way that Katniss’s fierce and yet compassionate behavior encourages people to form groups willing to sacrifice themselves (as opposed to killing each other) is directly threatening to the Capitol’s control.



SOCIETAL INEQUALITY

In *The Hunger Games*, social inequality occurs at all levels: throughout the nation of Panem, among the twelve districts, and among the inhabitants of any given district. It is this inequity that breeds strife and creates the main conflicts of the book. In Panem, for example, wealth is heavily concentrated in the hands of those living in the Capitol, and the result is that they can’t even comprehend the lives of the poor. The citizens of the Capitol don’t realize that the inhabitants of the districts are just as intelligent as they are—and just as capable of feeling—because they lead such drastically different lives. It’s this lack of understanding that allows the citizens of the Capitol to dismiss the suffering of the Hunger Games as entertainment: they don’t view the tributes as real people. They see them, via the “reality TV” of the Hunger Games, as a means of entertainment.

Among the districts, District 12 is known for being one of the poorest, and this affects Peeta’s and Katniss’s chances in the arena as well. Some of the other tributes have had the resources to train for the competition, and this advantage extends not only to combat, but also to winning sponsors who can provide food, water, and healing kits during the Games. This setup suggests that the disadvantages of being underprivileged tend to follow the poor even after they’ve left their initial circumstances behind.

Finally, the way that tributes are selected to be in the Games is perhaps the most obvious indicator of social inequality. Even though the lottery is random in theory, the tesserae system makes the poor more vulnerable. In exchange for extra rations of food and oil—tesserae—children can enter their names into the reaping additional times. Because the children of poor families need tesserae in order to survive and support their families, they’re more likely to be picked than the children of wealthier families.



APPEARANCES

The Hunger Games are set up as entertainment for the citizens of the Capitol and are essentially a very extreme reality television show. As with American reality TV, appearances matter a lot in the Hunger Games, and they don’t always depict reality. The tributes need to learn how to appeal to their viewers in the Capitol so that they can gather support from sponsors. In Katniss’s case, she pretends to be in love with Peeta, and she allows this romance to capture the attention of her audience.

Surface appearances also cover up the real brutality of the Hunger Games and the citizens who watch them. In the days leading up to the Games, for example, the tributes are housed in fancy rooms, dressed in designer clothes, and fed with lavish buffets. They participate in interviews so that their audience in the Capitol might get to know them before they fight to the

death. The citizens of the Capitol are obsessed with changing their own appearances as well, and they delight in exotic hair colors, advancements in plastic surgery, and extreme makeup. They're so steeped in the artificial world of appearance that it seems they no longer understand the division between what's real and what's fake, and this confusion numbs them to the reality of the Hunger Games and their own complicity in the system that allows—and demands—that the Hunger Games take place.



HYPOCRISY

By celebrating and watching the Hunger Games, the citizens of the Capitol suggest that the tributes, drawn from the districts of Panem, don't deserve the same security and respect that the people of the Capitol do. They suggest that the tributes are beneath them. However, during the course of the Games, many of the competitors prove that they're more capable of feeling genuine emotion—and acting on it—than the citizens of the Capitol who watch the Games play out on their TV screens. Katniss, for example, pauses in the middle of the Games in order to sing a soothing song for the dying Rue, and she drugs Peeta so that she can risk her own life to bring back medicine for him. The people of the Capitol are prone to exaggerated displays of feeling—laughing and weeping during the interviews with Caesar—but they do nothing based on these feelings. If anything, they enjoy sitting back to be entertained by the suffering on their screens. This is hypocritical on another level: while they lack authentic suffering in their own lives, the citizens of the Capitol demand real pain and death from their entertainment.

The Games also encourage a certain amount of hypocrisy among tributes. In order to maximize their chances for survival, many of the tributes form alliances with one another, even though they know that they will have to kill their allies eventually in order to win the Games. The tributes are also encouraged to put on a show. In Katniss's case, she acts as if she's infatuated with Peeta—when in reality, their setting in a cutthroat arena hardly breeds romance. Still, in order to survive, the tributes have to embrace a certain level of hypocrisy.

diversions rather than actual good governance, and it applies to the Hunger Games because the Games distract Panem's residents from the reality of the Capitol's control. Instead, citizens focus on watching the Games to see who will be killed next and who will become the winner, earning food (bread) and rewards for their district.

Bread is also a catalyst for change in *The Hunger Games*. First, there's Katniss's memory of the time Peeta saved her life by throwing burnt bread loaves her way. His act of kindness gave her hope and made her realize that there was a way she could keep her family alive—by foraging and hunting in the woods. And then, during the Games, Rue's district sends Katniss a loaf of bread to signal their appreciation for her treatment of Rue. In this unprecedented demonstration of solidarity between districts, there's a threat to the order of the Capitol, which relies on division of the districts in order to maintain control.



MOCKINGJAYS

Madge Undersee, the mayor's daughter, urgently gives Katniss a gold pin to wear to the Hunger Games as her token. The pin depicts a bird that Katniss comes to recognize as a mockingjay, a species of bird that resulted from a failed Capitol project. The pin, then, is a reminder of the Capitol's failure, of the possibility of the Capitol's failure, and thus hints at the possibility of rebellion. Mockingjays repeat patterns of notes they hear, and Rue and Katniss use them to communicate with one another during the Games. However, after Rue's death, mockingjays come to remind Katniss of what the Games have cost her, and their symbolism lights the fire of the rebellion that will be the subject of the next two books of *The Hunger Games* trilogy.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Scholastic Press edition of *The Hunger Games* published in 2010.

Chapter 1 Quotes

“District Twelve. Where you can starve to death in safety,” I mutter. Then I glance quickly over my shoulder. Even here, even in the middle of nowhere, you worry someone might overhear you.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker)

Related Themes:



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



BREAD

Suzanne Collins named her fictional dystopia after the Latin phrase, “panem et circenses,” which translates to “bread and games.” The phrase refers to a government's ability to appease its people with trivial

Page Number: 6


Explanation and Analysis

Katniss Everdeen, the protagonist of the novel, lives in District 12—an impoverished part of the nation of Panem. In District 12, the people are isolated and exploited by their government. One of the most important forms of exploitation Katniss notices in her community is surveillance. Because the government of Panem doesn't trust its own people, it watches them at all times, using a huge number of invisible cameras. Katniss has been born and raised in a surveillance state, in which everyone is being watched and recorded.

This passage also brings up the hypocrisy inherent in the Capitol's method of governing—the government promises safety and order, all while subjecting its citizens to starvation.

☝ Leave? How could I leave Prim, who is the only person in the world I'm certain I love? And Gale is devoted to his family. We can't leave, so why bother talking about it?

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Primrose Everdeen, Gale

Related Themes: 



Page Number: 10

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, we're introduced to two key characters, Gale and Prim. Katniss has been friends with Gale for her entire life—they're hunting partners. Prim is Katniss's little sister, whom she adores. Katniss often fantasizes about leaving her home in District 12, since her life there is hard and miserable. But she always comes back to the same facts: she loves Prim (and Gale, who would leave with her, loves his own family) too much to abandon her for her own selfish reasons. Our knowledge that Katniss loves Gale and Prim helps to humanize Katniss: like plenty of young, adventurous people (i.e., the people who would read the book), Katniss daydreams about journeying far away from home, but she's *also* deeply loyal to her family and friends.

☝ Gale knows his anger at Madge is misdirected. On other days, deep in the woods, I've listened to him rant about how the tesserae are just another tool to cause misery in our district. A way to plant hatred between the starving workers of the Seam and those who can generally count on supper and thereby ensure we will never trust one another.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Gale, Madge Undersee

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 14

Explanation and Analysis

In District 12, there's an annual lottery to determine the contestants in the annual Hunger Games. But because of the income inequality in the town, poor children usually end up competing in the Games more often than wealthy children: poor families are incentivized to enter their children in the lottery multiple times in exchange for food (a system called the tesserae).

Katniss insightfully points out that the government of Panem uses the tesserae to maintain its power. By sowing discord between the poor and the (relatively) wealthy in Panem (i.e., the working classes and the middle classes), the government of Panem virtually ensures that there's no strong alliance of citizens against the government's own authority.

☝ I protect Prim in every way I can, but I'm powerless against the reaping. The anguish I always feel when she's in pain wells up in my chest and threatens to register on my face. I notice her blouse has pulled out of her skirt in the back again and force myself to stay calm. "Tuck your tail in, little duck," I say, smoothing the blouse back in place.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Primrose Everdeen

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 15

Explanation and Analysis


In this passage, Katniss talks about her feelings of helplessness. Katniss has always been enormously close with her little sister, Prim, and she protects her from every possible danger. But since Prim is a child, she's required to enter in the annual Hunger Games lottery—i.e., she's

required to risk competing in the bloody Games themselves. Katniss isn't strong enough to protect Prim from being selected for the Games--she's simply not powerful enough to fight the authority of the government of Panem, and the lottery of the Games.

The passage is also important because Katniss displays some of the poise and self-control that will later serve her well during the Games. Although she's incredibly frightened on behalf of her sister, Katniss doesn't let her fear show: taking care of someone else ("tuck your tail in") makes Katniss more, not less, calm.

●● The result was Panem, a shining Capitol ringed by thirteen districts, which brought peace and prosperity to its citizens. Then came the Dark Days, the uprising of the districts against the Capitol. Twelve were defeated, the thirteenth obliterated. The Treaty of Treason gave us the new laws to guarantee peace and, as our yearly reminder that the Dark Days must never be repeated, it gave us the Hunger Games.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 18

Explanation and Analysis

Here we're introduced to some of the history of Panem. Panem, we're told, has presided over a country of 13 districts for many years. But once, the districts rose up against their tyrannical government. Although the Capitol was able to fend off the districts' attack, it has learned from its mistakes. In order to ensure that another uprising will never occur, the government demands all the districts of Panem to sacrifice their own children in a yearly Hunger Games. The demand of a sacrifice is a kind of threat: it implies that if the citizens don't cooperate with the government, other children will be hurt, too. It also divides the districts against one another through competition. And in an even more twisted kind of punishment, the Games aren't just about torture or fear—they're about *entertainment*. The districts must watch their children fight, but they're also supposed to enjoy it.

Chapter 2 Quotes

●● But a shift has occurred since I stepped up to take Prim's place, and now it seems I have become someone precious. At first one, then another, then almost every member of the crowd touches the three middle fingers of their left hand to their lips and holds it out to me. It is an old and rarely used gesture of our district, occasionally seen at funerals. It means thanks, it means admiration, it means goodbye to someone you love.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Primrose Everdeen

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 24

Explanation and Analysis


Almost from the beginning of the book, Katniss is portrayed as a martyr and a heroine. Katniss sacrifices her own life (or at least gravely endangers it) by volunteering to take her little sister's place in the Hunger Games. She's frightened of being killed (as nearly everyone in the Hunger Games will be), but her love for her sister outweighs her own fear of death. In short, Katniss is a martyr, willing to die on behalf of her sister, as well as the community of District 12 as a whole (by volunteering for the Games, she's temporarily protecting the other people of her community from harm).

The passage is also an early sign that Katniss is *dangerous* to the government of Panem. Notice that nobody else in Panem volunteers to take Katniss's place: unlike Katniss, they're too frightened to endanger their own lives. In other words, Katniss's love for her family makes her brave and selfless, while the rest of the community's fear makes them meek and obedient to the government. Katniss is exactly the kind of person the government *doesn't* want around: a strong, unintimidated young woman who'll fight for Prim, even if it means fighting the government itself.

●● Maybe if I had thanked him at some point, I'd be feeling less conflicted now. I thought about it a couple of times, but the opportunity never seemed to present itself. And now it never will. Because we're going to be thrown into an arena to fight to the death. Exactly how am I supposed to work in a thank-you in there? Somehow it just won't seem sincere if I'm trying to slit his throat.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Peeta Mellark

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 32

Explanation and Analysis


In this part of the novel, Katniss remembers the time when Peeta saved her life, and the lives of her family members. Peeta, a baker's son, took pity on Katniss, who was looking for food, and gave her some leftover loaves of bread. Katniss never spoke to Peeta, let alone thanked him for his generosity.

Katniss realizes, with a touch of gallows humor, that she can't exactly thank Peeta now--anything she says to him will have an undercurrent of competition, since she'll be fighting against him in the Hunger Games (and may well be the one to kill him). As Katniss struggles to preserve her sanity in the face of bloody competition, dark humor of the kind exemplified in the passage becomes of the utmost importance--as long as she can muster a joke, she's still the same old Katniss.

Chapter 3 Quotes

●● Peeta Mellark, on the other hand, has obviously been crying and interestingly enough does not seem to be trying to cover it up. I immediately wonder if this will be his strategy in the Games. To appear weak and frightened, to reassure the other tributes that he is no competition at all, and then come out fighting.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Peeta Mellark

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 40

Explanation and Analysis

At this point, Katniss and Peeta still don't know each other. As a result, Katniss finds it difficult, if not impossible, to trust Peeta. She notices that Peeta seems sad and lonely, but she doesn't trust such an "image" of weakness. Indeed, Katniss imagines that Peeta is crafting his image so that his opponents won't take him seriously until it's too late.

The fact that Katniss supposes that Peeta *might* be performing for his competitors suggests that she herself is a capable performer who can use appearances to her

advantage (in other words, it takes one to know one). This also stresses the importance of appearances and competition in the Games--when everyone is fighting for their lives, there's no room for honesty or trust.

●● "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.

Related Characters: Effie Trinket, Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Peeta Mellark

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 44

Explanation and Analysis


Peeta and Katniss, the two competitors from District 12, meet Effie Trinket, the narrow-minded, rather vapid manager of the Hunger Games ceremonies. Effie is disturbingly out of touch with the realities of Panem: for instance, when discussing the competitors from last year, she complains that they were messy eaters (even though, as Katniss points out, they were probably starving to death, and didn't care about table manners in the slightest).

The passage exemplifies the social inequalities of Panem. The wealthiest people in the country are shockingly out of touch with the poorest people: the wealthy literally cannot understand how the poor live. (Collins has stated in interviews that she based the social inequalities of Panem on the economic condition of the U.S. following the Great Recession.)

Chapter 4 Quotes

●● A kind Peeta Mellark is far more dangerous to me than an unkind one. Kind people have a way of working their way inside me and rooting there. And I can't let Peeta do this. Not where we're going. So I decide, from this moment on, to have as little as possible to do with the baker's son.


Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Peeta Mellark

Related Themes: **Page Number:** 49**Explanation and Analysis**

In this passage, Peeta offers Katniss some cookies that his father baked. As Katniss realizes, Peeta is genuinely trying to befriend Katniss prior to the beginning of the Hunger Games tournament. Katniss was wrong to assume that Peeta was trying to "play" his competitors--he really is a kind, likable guy. But Katniss continues to hold Peeta at a distance. Even if Peeta *is* a likable guy, Katniss refuses to befriend him.

As Katniss explains it, she refuses to let Peeta "root inside" her. Put a different way, Katniss doesn't want to develop any sympathy for Peeta--there's a strong possibility that she'll have to kill him at some point during the Hunger Games. In order to save herself the guilt and self-hatred, Katniss decides to ignore Peeta as much as possible: she doesn't want to grow attached to one of her future victims.


●● 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.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Haymitch Abernathy**Related Themes:** **Page Number:** 56**Explanation and Analysis**

As Katniss and Peeta prepare to compete in the Hunger Games, they spend more time with Haymitch. Haymitch is a former Hunger Games victor whose job is to train future competitors his district, 12. In spite of his prowess in the Games, Haymitch is portrayed as a lazy alcoholic, often too intoxicated to speak or walk straight. Katniss realizes that District 12 never has any sponsors--i.e., rich people who send food and supplies to competitors in the game--because rich people don't like Haymitch, and therefore they dislike the competitors he's training.

Katniss's realization reinforces the vast inequalities in Panem--inequalities which "snowball" over time. Because of the inequalities between poor districts like 12 and rich districts like 2, victors from District 12 tend to be gruff and unlikable. Over time, the lack of charisma in District 12 victors results in fewer sponsorships from the wealthy, and therefore fewer victors from District 12--and thus less prestige for District 12 overall. The deck is stacked against District 12 in every way: economics virtually ensures that it will remain poor for years.

●● The people begin to point at us eagerly as they recognize a tribute train rolling into the city. I step away from the window, sickened by their excitement, knowing they can't wait to watch us die. But Peeta holds his ground, actually waving and smiling at the gawking crowd. He only stops when the train pulls into the station, blocking us from their view.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Peeta Mellark**Related Themes:**  **Page Number:** 59**Explanation and Analysis**

Katniss and Peeta have arrived at the Capitol, where they will soon begin competing in the Hunger Games. As they arrive, Katniss and Peeta notice a huge crowd of people--people who are clapping and cheering. Katniss rightly sees how "sick" the crowd's behavior is: they're cheering for Katniss and Peeta's impending deaths.

It's interesting to note the difference between Katniss and Peeta's behavior. Peeta is more willing than Katniss to wave back at the crowd, acknowledging their applause. While it's possible that Peeta really does buy into the pomp and pageantry of the Hunger Games, it's more likely that he's just acting his part, getting people to root for him, all while knowing full-well how sick the crowd's behavior is. Peeta knows that if he gets the crowd on his side, he'll have an easier time winning the Games.

Chapter 5 Quotes

●● Days of hunting and gathering for this one meal and even then it would be a poor substitution for the Capitol version. What must it be like, I wonder, to live in a world where food appears at the press of a button?

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 65


Explanation and Analysis

As Katniss travels to the Capitol of Panem to participate in the Hunger Games, she's exposed to obscene amounts of wealth and luxury. In District 12, Katniss has only the most limited access to food, money and entertainment--in the Capitol, however, luxury is everywhere. She's dazzled by what she sees--the hunter can barely imagine a life in which food is so readily available.

Katniss's unfamiliarity with the lifestyle of the Capitol is both a strength and a weakness. She's a little intimidated by the pomp and pageantry of the Capitol, and her intimidated attitude will sometimes make her a reluctant competitor in the Games. At the same time, Katniss's very lack of familiarity with the Capitol allows her to see through the gaudiness of the Games. While her competitors savor the audience's applause and get carried away with the spectacle of the Games, Katniss finds it impossible to be seduced by such things. As a result, she's a calmer and more level-headed competitor--she has no illusions about the grim realities behind the Games and the Capitol's wealth.

●● Cinna has given me a great advantage. No one will forget me. Not my look, not my name. Katniss. The girl who was on fire.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Cinna

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 70

Explanation and Analysis

Katniss has an important ally during the early days of the Hunger Games--her stylist, Cinna. Cinna is a talented designer and makeup artist who's been tasked with finding the right "look" for Katniss. Cinna steps up to the task and creates a fiery, highly memorable outfit for Katniss, one that makes her stand out from the other competitors and earns her the crowd's admiration.

Thanks to Cinna, Katniss begins to realize the importance of glamour and spectacle in the Hunger Games. It's not enough to "play the game"--Katniss must also seduce the audience, convincing them to sponsor her and send her supplies. In short, Cinna teaches Katniss an important

lesson: win the crowd and you'll win the Games.

Chapter 6 Quotes

●● "...but I've done my best with what I had to work with. How Katniss sacrificed herself for her sister. How you've both successfully struggled to overcome the barbarism of your district."

Barbarism? That's ironic coming from a woman helping to prepare us for slaughter.

Related Characters: Effie Trinket, Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Primrose Everdeen

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 74

Explanation and Analysis

As Katniss prepares for the start of the Hunger Games, she spends more time with Effie Trinket, her manager, and is constantly amazed by Effie's insensitivity and narrow-mindedness. Effie is always in a hurry: she loves to complain about the dirtiness of the competitors from District 12, and her greatest worry seems to be that she'll be unable to make the District 12 competitors presentable in the Capitol.

Effie is a classic example of someone who "can't see the forest for the trees." She's so obsessed with doing her job--i.e., making the Hunger Games fun and exciting--that she seems not to understand how barbaric and bloody the Hunger Games really are.

●● Rebellion? I have to think about that one a moment. But when I remember the other couples, standing stiffly apart, never touching or acknowledging each other, as if their fellow tribute did not exist, as if the Games had already begun, I know what Haymitch means. Presenting ourselves not as adversaries but as friends has distinguished us as much as the fiery costumes.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Peeta Mellark, Haymitch Abernathy

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 79


Explanation and Analysis

During the Hunger Games opening ceremony, Katniss and Peeta hold hands in front of an audience of millions. Neither Katniss nor Peeta understand why their actions are interpreted as being so rebellious, but they are. As Haymitch explains to them in the quotation, Katniss and Peeta send a clear message by holding hands. The entire point of the Hunger Games is to turn similar people against one another: the children of one district against the children of another, and eventually, competitors from the same district against each other. By holding hands, Peeta and Katniss send a clear message: the Hunger Games have begun, but they're not playing along. Instead of competing against one another, they're going to work together.

Haymitch's explanation establishes the idea that gestures and tiny actions can have enormous ramifications for the Games. Since the Hunger Games themselves are a highly symbolic event, even the tiniest disruption in symbolism--such as holding hands--can send a message of disobedience and even outright rebellion against the government of Panem.

☛ The Capitol twinkles like a vast field of fireflies. Electricity in District 12 comes and goes, usually we only have it a few hours a day. Often the evenings are spent in candlelight. The only time you can count on it is when they're airing the Games or some important government message on television that it's mandatory to watch. But here there would be no shortage. Ever.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 80

Explanation and Analysis

Katniss is again astounded by the opulence of life in the Capitol of Panem. In her hometown of District 12, life is harsh and difficult, due to the absence of food, reliable electricity, and running water in the community. In the Capitol, by contrast, there's constant electricity, as well as huge, intimidating buildings illuminated with electricity at all hours of the day and night. Katniss has never seen anything like it.


Katniss's unfamiliarity with the glitz of Capitol life is one of her biggest assets. In the Capitol, and in wealthier districts like 2 or 3, the people are more complacent--they reap the benefits of the other districts' suffering, and so they're less likely to challenge the status quo. Katniss, however, must

fight for everything she wants: if she wants dinner, she has to go out and hunt for it herself.

Chapter 7 Quotes

☛ Almost all of the boys and at least half of the girls are bigger than I am, even though many of the tributes have never been fed properly...The exceptions are the kids from the wealthier districts, the volunteers, the ones who have been fed and trained throughout their lives for this moment.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 94

Explanation and Analysis

Katniss checks out her competitors in the Hunger Games. Many of the children are just like her: malnourished, tough, forced to spend all their time fighting for their food. As Katniss has already explained, the biased format of the lottery system virtually ensures that the majority of the Hunger Games competitors are from poor families.

Katniss also notices that some of her competitors are well-fed. Katniss finds it disturbing that some of the Tributes in the Hunger Games have actually volunteered for the task. They've spent their entire lives training for the Games--learning how to use various weapons, working out, etc. The residents of the wealthiest districts, such as 1 and 2, pay Tributes to fight on their behalf, seeing it as a way to win glory and fame.

In other words, there are two kinds of competitors in the Games: poor, malnourished people, and well-paid volunteers. In a way, both kinds of competitors have spent an entire lifetime training for the Games: the poor children because they've always had to fight to survive; the wealthy volunteers because they've grown up preparing for the Games.

Chapter 8 Quotes

☛ 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. How do you sidestep that?

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Peeta Mellark, Gale

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 112

Explanation and Analysis


In this passage, Collins foreshadows the famous "Katniss-Gale-Peeta" love triangle, which shows up again and again through the Hunger Games trilogy. At various points, Katniss is more attracted to Gale than to Peeta; at other times, she prefers Peeta. For the time being, though, Katniss barely thinks of her relationships with Gale and Peeta as being romantic. Her friendship with Gale is seemingly platonic, and indeed, she can barely trust Peeta at all--she knows that they're going to have to fight to the death at some point down the line, after all.

The passage raises an important point: all alliances in the Hunger Games are temporary. Even if it makes sense to work with Peeta in the short term, Katniss knows that their "friendship" can end only one way: with one or both of their deaths. Although Peeta and Katniss have "rebelled" against Panem by holding hands, showing their trust and friendship, the fact remains that in the end, they'll have to fight one another. In short, "the house always wins"--Panem always succeeds in getting Hunger Games competitors to kill.

Chapter 10 Quotes

☝ "He made you look desirable! And let's face it, you can use all the help you can get in that department. You were about as romantic as dirt until he said he wanted you. Now they all do. You're all they're talking about. The star-crossed lovers from District Twelve!" says Haymitch.

Related Characters: Haymitch Abernathy (speaker), Peeta Mellark, Katniss Everdeen

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 135

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Haymitch sums up the "public relations" side of the Hunger Games. Katniss and Peeta, thanks largely to Peeta's confession that he has a crush on Katniss, are now perceived as lovers. As Haymitch rightly points out, Peeta's confession (whether it's true or false) has accomplished a lot for Katniss. By giving the audiences of

the Hunger Games a juicy story, Peeta has ensured that rich sponsors will send both District 12 competitors lots of food and supplies, while also ensuring that the organizers of the Hunger Games will design the competitions to keep Peeta and Katniss alive for as long as their "story" remains interesting.

On a more general level, Peeta and Katniss's "romance" is crucial for the Hunger Games because it allows the audience to see the competitors as human beings, not animals being sent to the slaughter. With Katniss and Peeta engaged in the most relatable, human thing imaginable--love--it's increasingly difficult for the audience to enjoy the bloodshed and violence of the Games.

☝ "...Only I keep wishing I could think of a way to...to show the Capitol they don't own me. That I'm more than just a piece in their Games," says Peeta.

Related Characters: Peeta Mellark (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 142

Explanation and Analysis

Here Peeta expresses his desire to maintain his identity and om during the Hunger Games. As he explains to Katniss, he doesn't want to become a savage killer, even though becoming one is exactly what the government of Panem wants him to do.

Although Katniss initially rejects Peeta's statement as hypocritical (since he's going to be killing competitors no matter what happens), Peeta seems to be of a like mind with Katniss. Like Katniss, Peeta recognizes that the point of the Games is to make similar people fight with one another, creating rivalries between Districts and therefore cementing the strength of the Capitol. While Peeta is too weak to overthrow the Capitol itself, he can subvert the Games by behaving differently: i.e., by holding hands with Katniss, by refusing to fight his competitors, etc.

Chapter 15 Quotes

☝ It's interesting, hearing about her life. We have so little communication with anyone outside our district. In fact, I wonder if the Gamemakers are blocking out our conversation, because even though the information seems harmless, they don't want people in different districts to know about one another.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Rue

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 202

Explanation and Analysis



In the middle of the Hunger Games, Katniss forms a friendship with Rue, a competitor from another district of Panem. Instead of fighting Rue, Katniss asks her about her life at home, and Rue treats Katniss the same way.

By doing something as simple as having a friendly conversation, Katniss and Rue are actually rebelling against the format of the Hunger Games. The Gamemakers (the designers of the Hunger Games) want competitors to hate each other, thereby breeding division throughout Panem as a whole. By trading hatred for friendship, Rue and Katniss are challenging the basic premise of the Hunger Games. One mark of Rue and Katniss's rebelliousness is the fact that the Gamemakers are probably censoring their conversation: although it seems harmless, the Gamemakers know full-well that no signs of true collaboration between districts (or, by the same token, information about the different districts) can be shown on television.

Chapter 18 Quotes

☝☝ I can't stop looking at Rue, smaller than ever, a baby animal curled up in a nest of netting. I can't bring myself to leave her like this. Past harm, but seeming utterly defenseless. To hate the boy from District 1, who also appears so vulnerable in death, seems inadequate. It's the Capitol I hate, for doing this to all of us.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Rue

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 233

Explanation and Analysis

In this chapter, Katniss's friend Rue is killed by a competitor from District 1. Rue's death is important to the plot of the novel for a number of reasons. First, it reminds us that Katniss, in spite of her ability to kill, is fundamentally a kind, sympathetic person, who only entered the Hunger Games in the first place because of her love for Prim, her sister. In Rue, Katniss seems to find a counterpart to Prim--a young, innocent girl--and so when Rue dies, Katniss seems almost as grief-stricken as if Prim had died.

Furthermore, Rue's death is important because it

challenges Katniss's ideas about the Hunger Games themselves. So far, Katniss has been willing to participate in the violence of the Games: she knows full-well that the Capitol is just trying to breed anger and hatred between the districts, but she still wants to survive and return to her family. In this scene, Katniss is tempted to blame the boy from District 1 for Rue's death, but instead, she forces herself to see the big picture: Rue is only death because of the Capitol itself. In other words, Katniss doesn't "take the bait." Instead of doing what the Capitol wants--fighting with the other districts, and strengthening the Capitol's authority--she recognizes who her real enemies are: the Capitol and the Gamemakers.

Chapter 19 Quotes

☝☝ Peeta, who's been wounded, is now my ally...it just makes sense to protect each other. And in my case--being one of the star-crossed lovers from District 12--it's an absolute requirement if I want any more help from sympathetic sponsors.

Related Characters: Katniss Everdeen (speaker), Peeta Mellark

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 243

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Katniss fully decides to protect Peeta during the Hunger Games. Peeta has been seriously wounded--he's incapable of defending himself in any capacity. But instead of killing Peeta (finishing him off, that is), Katniss chooses to help and nurture him.

It's important to understand why Katniss chooses to help Peeta. Katniss knows the rules of the Hunger Games: she knows that there can only be one winner, meaning that any help she offers to her competitors is hurting her own chances of surviving the Games. And yet Katniss *also* recognizes that her chances of receiving more sponsorship from her wealthy supporters hinges upon her keeping up a "romance" with Peeta. In short, the "story" of romance between Katniss and Peeta controls Katniss's behavior in this scene: she has no choice but to play along in the hopes of receiving more supplies.


For the time being, Katniss is still mostly acting out of self-preservation: she clearly feels genuine sympathy for Peeta, but she also accepts that helping him will be beneficial for both of them. The most complicated part of their budding

romance/friendship is that it's always very public, and it's always tinged with acting and keeping up appearances.

Chapter 26 Quotes

☛☛ “Listen up. You’re in trouble. Word is the Capitol’s furious about you showing them up in the arena. The one thing they can’t stand is being laughed at, and they’re the joke of Panem,” says Haymitch.

Related Characters: Haymitch Abernathy (speaker), Katniss Everdeen

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 350

Explanation and Analysis

At the end of the Hunger Games, Katniss and Peeta manage to become the first co-champions of the Games. Instead of playing along with the "kill or be killed" philosophy of the Hunger Games, they agree to commit suicide together,

forcing the Gamemakers to declare them *both* champions (the Gamemakers know that it's better to have two champions than to have none, especially when they're such crowd favorites).

Although Katniss and Peeta have acted out of a desire for survival, as well as love and sympathy for each other, they've unleashed forces far bigger than they could have imagined. By disobeying the rules of the Hunger Games, they've challenged the authority of the Capitol itself. Put a slightly different way, Peeta and Katniss have proven that the Capitol is "enslaved" to the Hunger Games in much the same way that the competitors themselves are. The Capitol is so dependent on the successful completion of the Hunger Games that they have no choice but to submit to Peeta and Katniss's demands.

After a life spent living in the government's tyranny, Katniss has finally found a way to fight back. By keeping up the act of a romance with Peeta, and by gambling that the Capitol would rather have two champions than none, Katniss has saved her life and protected Peeta's life, too.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1

Katniss wakes up on the morning of the reaping to find that her little sister, Prim, has moved to their mother's bed in the middle of the night. Prim's ugly cat, Buttercup, stands guard over her while she sleeps. Katniss recalls how she tried to drown the kitten years ago, when Prim first brought him home, because she didn't want another mouth to feed. But Prim begged, and Katniss gave in—now Katniss is glad she kept Buttercup alive for the comfort the cat offers to Prim.

Katniss rises from bed and gets dressed. She grabs her forage bag and retrieves a piece of goat cheese that Prim has left for her under a bowl, and then Katniss steps outside. Katniss's family lives in the part of District 12 known as the Seam. It's usually swarming with people heading to work in the morning—however, today is reaping day, and the reaping itself doesn't take place until two, so the streets are empty.

Katniss's home is almost at the edge of the Seam, and she heads towards the fence that surrounds District 12, separating the district from the woods outside. In theory, the fence is electrified 24/7 in order to deter predators, but because District 12 is lucky to have electricity even two to three hours a day, the fence is usually safe to touch. Katniss still listens for a telltale electric hum, however, before she crawls beneath a gap in the fence.

In the woods, Katniss retrieves a bow and a sheath of arrows from their hiding spot in a log. The weapons serve as protection from the predators in the woods, but they also allow those who know how to hunt to find food. Katniss's father taught her how to use a bow before he died in a mining accident five years ago, when Katniss was eleven. She still has nightmares about her father's death, however, and wakes up screaming for him to run.

Trespassing in the woods is illegal, and poaching is punishable by death, but most of the Peacekeepers turn a blind eye because they enjoy the fresh meat that comes out of hunting. More people would venture in the woods if they had proper weapons, but most have only a knife. Katniss's father crafted her bow and arrows.

Katniss's feelings towards Buttercup demonstrate both how much she loves Prim and how dire their family's financial circumstances are. Katniss clearly struggles enough to support the human members of the family without the addition of a pet. However, she's finally willing to include Buttercup for Prim's sake.



It's already clear that Katniss's family struggles to have enough to eat—so the fact that Prim saves a piece of goat cheese for Katniss shows how close they are. Both sisters are considerate of the other and care about the other's happiness.



The fence is the first hint of the Capitol's effort to keep the districts divided. In theory, it prevents people (and animals) from coming in and out. However, the electricity almost never works—another sign of the economic difficulties in District 12—so Katniss is able to crawl under.



The woods appear dangerous at first—and they are—but to those who know how to take a second look, they also present an opportunity for food. Surface appearances don't reveal everything. Similarly, Katniss usually acts tough and stoic, but her nightmares about her father reveal how emotionally vulnerable she can be.



The Peacekeepers in District 12 are hypocritical—they're willing to bend the rules if it benefits them.



Katniss recalls that when she was younger, she would blurt out criticisms of the government, frightening her mother. As she grew older, however, Katniss learned that this would only cause more trouble, so now she avoids engaging in anything other than small talk. She even avoids discussing her opinions at home, where Prim might hear her and start repeating her words.

The only person Katniss feels that she can truly be free with is her hunting partner, Gale. Gale refers to her as Catnip because when the two first met, Katniss whispered her name so quietly that Gale had thought she said “Catnip.” Soon afterwards, a lynx had started following her, looking for handouts, and the nickname stuck.

Gale has brought a loaf of real bakery **bread** to share on the morning of reaping day, and he and Katniss make a meal out of the bread, goat cheese, and blackberries from surrounding bushes. They mimic Effie Trinket’s affected Capitol accent and the catchphrase of the Hunger Games: “May the odds be ever in your favor!” They joke because the alternative is to be terrified about the possibility of being chosen for the Hunger Games on reaping day.

As Katniss watches Gale, she notes that their features are so similar, they might be related. Almost everyone in the Seam has straight black hair, olive skin, and gray eyes. Katniss’s mother and Prim, however, are exceptions, with light hair and blue eyes. This is because Katniss’s mother’s parents were part of a small merchant class that catered to officials and Peacekeepers, selling healing herbs at an apothecary shop.

Katniss’s father would sometimes bring herbs that he had foraged in the woods to sell to the apothecary, and that’s how Katniss’s parents met. Katniss tries to remember that her mother must have really loved her father to leave her home to move to the Seam, but she still feels angry about the way her mother became unresponsive after the mining accident that killed Katniss’s father.

As Katniss grows older, she begins to understand the importance of keeping up appearances for the sake of protecting herself—a lesson that will come in handy during the Hunger Games. Her concern also stems from her care for Prim. Katniss might be more reckless with her words if she didn’t have people she loved who could get hurt.



As the chapter progresses, it becomes clear that Katniss—tough as she is—has formed bonds with many people in District 12. Her relationship with Gale, especially, is something of a slap in the face to the Capitol, since they met outside of legal bounds while hunting—a criminal activity.



By giving their outing the appearance of a celebration, Gale and Katniss are protecting themselves from the reality that two people in District 12 will be sent to their probable deaths later that day. Their joke about Effie’s accent also demonstrates how separate the Capitol is from the districts. Even their manner of speaking is so different that it’s laughable. And yet their laughter is also the only rebellion they have against a Capitol that controls their fate.



Even within the district, different social classes are divided, and it seems that the classes are divided by ethnicity. Katniss’s mother’s lighter features belong to the higher merchant class, while the coal miners all have the same darker features. These divisions keep District 12 weak, ensuring it will never rebel against the Capitol.



Katniss’s mother made a financial sacrifice when she decided to marry Katniss’s father—another sign that the classes are unequal even within the district. Katniss understands that her mother loved her father, and this love humanizes her mother somewhat—it’s the only way Katniss can view her mother’s absence after her father’s death as anything but a betrayal.



Gale prepares the food they've brought, and they sit back to enjoy the morning and the food, which would be a perfect combination if it weren't for that fact that their holiday is a result of reaping day. Gale suddenly suggests that they run away to live in the woods, but quickly dismisses the idea when he remembers all their "kids." By kids he means their younger siblings and mothers, who rely on the food Gale and Katniss bring home from their outings.

Katniss is confused by Gale's outburst—there's never been anything romantic between them. They met in the woods when Katniss was twelve and Gale was fourteen, and it took a long time before they trusted each other enough to start working as a team. Gale suggests that they fish at the lake and leave their poles while they gather greens and strawberries in the woods. The dinner after the reaping is supposed to be celebratory for everyone except the families of those whose children have been selected for the reaping.

By the end of the morning, Gale and Katniss have a dozen fish, a bag of greens, and a gallon of strawberries. On the way home, they swing by the Hob, the black market that operates in an abandoned warehouse in the Seam. They trade some of their fish for **bread** and salt, and then they bring some strawberries to the mayor, who has a special fondness for them and can afford the price. The mayor's daughter, Madge, opens the door, dressed in an expensive white dress. Gale comments on the dress, and Madge responds that she wants to look her best in case she gets picked at the reaping, and Gale reacts poorly, scoffing at Madge's worries.

The reaping system is unfair, biased against the poor. Technically, the lottery is random, but after the age of twelve, children can opt to have their names entered into the lottery multiple times in exchange for tesserae, which can be used to purchase more grain and oil. As a result, the children of poor families tend to have more entries in the lottery than do the children of wealthier families who can survive without tesserae. Katniss now has twenty entries in the reaping, and Gale, who has been single-handedly feeding a family of five for seven years, has forty-two entries, which is why he scoffs at Madge's fears—she likely only has four or five entries.

Gale demonstrates warring desires. He wants to run away and save himself from the possibility of being chosen on reaping day, but he can't because he's loyal to those who rely on him in District 12. His decision to stay and support his family instead of trying to save himself is a less dramatic version of Katniss's later impulse to sacrifice herself for Prim.



Families in the districts are forced to act as if reaping day is a cause for celebration. The Capitol asserts its power by controlling even the appearance of a horrible ritual and making it seem commemorative.



People wear their nicest clothes on reaping day because they know that they'll be on camera if they're picked. How strong and poised they appear during the reaping can affect how many sponsors they get during the Games.



The lottery system is a prime example of social inequality. Even though it's random, poor children are far more likely to get picked because of the tesserae system. This inequality also breeds resentment between classes, as Gale demonstrates—and this resentment is just one more way the Capitol keeps its people divided so that they won't unite together and rebel.



Gale and Katniss split up the food they've gathered and head to their respective homes. When Katniss arrives at her house, she finds that her mother and Prim are already ready, with Prim wearing Katniss's first reaping outfit, a skirt and ruffled blouse. Katniss bathes and then puts on what her mother has laid out for her, which turns out to be one of her mother's own dresses from her past—much nicer than anything Katniss herself owns. Her mother also braids Katniss's hair on top of her head, and when she's finished, Katniss can barely recognize herself.

Katniss attempts to comfort Prim, who is attending her first reaping. Even though the odds are in Prim's favor, she's still terrified, and Katniss feels powerless to protect her as she usually does. They decide to save everything Katniss has brought home for dinner, and for lunch, the family eats rough bread made from tessera grain and drinks milk from Prim's goat.

At one o'clock, everyone heads to the square—attendance is mandatory for the reaping. Twelve- through eighteen-year-olds are roped off, and family members stand off to the sides. Everyone focuses on the temporary stage in front of the Justice Building. It holds three chairs, a podium, and two large glass balls filled with names, one for girls and one for boys. Two of the three chairs are filled with Madge's dad, Mayor Undersee, and Effie Trinket, District 12's escort from the Capitol.

As the clock strikes two, the mayor steps up to the podium and begins to read about the history of Panem, the country that rose out of the ashes of what once was North America. For a while, there was peace and prosperity for Panem, which consisted of a shining Capitol and thirteen surrounding districts. Afterwards, however, the districts rebelled against the Capitol, and twelve of the districts were defeated and one obliterated. The Hunger Games serve as a yearly reminder that the districts must never rebel again.

The rules of the Hunger Games are that each of the twelve districts must provide one girl and one boy, called tributes, to participate. The twenty-four tributes will be trapped in a large outdoor arena that can hold anything from desert to rainforest while they fight to the death over a period of several weeks. The last tribute standing wins. The competition is the Capitol's method of reminding the districts that they are completely at the Capitol's mercy. The districts are also forced to treat the Games as a festivity. The winner receives a life of ease back home, and their district is showered with prizes, largely consisting of food.

Katniss's mother still has some of her dresses from her days as part of the merchant class, and Katniss's hesitation when putting on the dress shows just how rare it is to see such fine material in the Seam—another sign of social inequality. Katniss doesn't recognize herself after she dresses up because she doesn't usually do so. It's to her advantage to appear tougher when she lives in the Seam.



Katniss again shows how much she cares about Prim. Katniss adjusts her own appearance to seem calmer for Prim's sake.



In the square, children are roped off from their families, another division that would make it harder for a district to rise up and rebel during a reaping. The fact that the reaping takes place in front of the Justice Building is hypocritical, since the Hunger Games are anything but just—they favor wealthier districts and demonstrate how much control the Capitol has over the districts.



The Capitol maintains control by divvying up the country into twelve districts—and ensuring their dependence upon the government. Each of the districts specializes in producing only particular goods and are therefore not self-sufficient and must rely on centralized distribution in order to survive.



The Hunger Games is one of the best methods that the Capitol has for ensuring that the districts remain divided. Tributes from different districts are pitted against each other for survival. When one wins, the entire district is showered with food and luxuries like sugar, further emphasizing the inequalities between different districts and different classes.



In the past seventy-four years, District 12 has only had two victors, only one of which is still alive. As the mayor reads his name, Haymitch Abernathy drunkenly stumbles onto the stage and gives Effie an unwelcome hug. The mayor quickly wraps up his speech and introduces Effie, whose pink wig is slightly off-center after her encounter with Haymitch. Effie gives a short speech before it's time to read the names. She begins with the girls' names, and Katniss prays that she won't be called. As it turns out, her name isn't the one called—instead, it's her sister, Prim.

CHAPTER 2

Katniss remembers a time when she fell asleep while waiting in a tree for game to wander by. She fell ten feet to the ground and had the wind knocked out of her, and she struggled to breathe for several moments afterwards. She feels the same way now, shocked that Prim's name has been called for the reaping, even though she only had one entry in the bowl. The crowd murmurs unhappily as Prim steps up towards the stage, and the sight of her little sister brings Katniss back to her senses.

Katniss runs to Prim just as she is about to mount the steps and shouts that she will volunteer as tribute instead. There is a rule that once a tribute's name has been pulled from the ball, another eligible child of the same gender can volunteer to take his or her place. In some districts, where winning is common and a great honor, volunteering is common, but in District 12, there hasn't been a volunteer in decades. Being selected for the Hunger Games is almost the equivalent of receiving a death sentence in Katniss's district.

Prim begins screaming hysterically, and Katniss gruffly tells her to let go—Katniss doesn't want to reveal any weaknesses before the camera. Gale lifts Prim away, and Katniss climbs the steps. Effie announces Katniss and asks for a big round of applause, but not one person in the district claps. Their silence is the boldest form of dissent they can manage, until a few people—and then the entire crowd—touch three fingers of their left hands to their mouths and hold them up in a gesture that means farewell.

At this moment, Haymitch staggers across the stage to congratulate Katniss. He gets out only a few words before he loses his balance and plummets off the stage, knocking himself unconscious. As Haymitch is wheeled away on a stretcher, Effie continues on to select the boy tribute. His name, Peeta Mellark, is familiar to Katniss.

One of the reasons that District 12 has only had two victors in the history of the Hunger Games is that it's one of the poorer districts. Tributes aren't as well fed and receive no training for the Games, so they're unlikely to win. The disadvantages of being underprivileged follow them into the Hunger Games arena.



When Prim's name is called, Katniss is shocked—it's literally her worst nightmare come true. However, her love for Prim allows her to summon the strength to come back to her senses.



Katniss's love for Prim gives her the strength to volunteer for what most would consider to be a death sentence. In a district where more people are struggling and looking out for their own survival, this kind of sacrifice makes a huge impression, and suddenly thrusting Katniss forward as an example of the way that people can be united by loyalty and love despite the Capitol's efforts to divide.



Katniss immediately adjusts her appearance to be stoic so that she doesn't reveal any weakness in front of the cameras. She understands how important it can be to maintain a strong face in order to protect herself. Katniss also sees that her act of love has elicited the compassion of everyone in her district, even those who are normally beyond caring about the reaping.



Haymitch cultivates his own appearance for the cameras—although it's true that he does have an alcohol problem, it seems that part of his appearance is calculated to entertain. He and Katniss share the knowledge that appearances can be important.



Although Katniss has never directly spoken to Peeta, he's had a profound impact on her life. Three months after Katniss's father was killed in the mining accident, Katniss was struggling to support her sister and mother. Her mother had become unresponsive, sitting and staring into space instead of getting a job that could support the family. Katniss kept their predicament a secret because she didn't want to be placed in a community home, but the money had run out, and they were slowly starving to death—not an uncommon fate in District 12.

On the day of Katniss's encounter with Peeta Mellark, she had been searching in the trash bins behind the shops, looking for scraps to bring home to her family, who had been surviving on mint tea for the past three days. Unfortunately, the bins had just been emptied. When Katniss passed the baker's and checked the trash bin, the baker's wife came out and began screaming at her. As she yelled, Katniss could see the baker's son, Peeta, watching her—they knew each other from school but had never spoken.

Katniss walked away from the encounter and collapsed at the roots of a nearby apple tree, feeling too tired and sick and weak to go on. She heard a clatter in the bakery and then the sound of a blow, and soon there were footsteps heading towards her. Katniss looked up to see the boy—Peeta—with a red welt on his cheek and carrying two loaves of burnt **bread**. His mother yelled at him to feed the bread to the pigs, and he began to tear off chunks from the burned parts to toss into the trough. When his mother disappeared to help a customer, Peeta threw the bread loaves to Katniss.

Katniss quickly shoved the loaves under her shirt and returned home, where Prim and her mother were. The three of them devoured an entire loaf with mint tea. The next day, the warm weather was finally setting in, and as Katniss and Prim headed home in the afternoon, Katniss spotted the first dandelion of the year. She remembered the hours spent in the woods with her father, and that's when she realized how she was going to support her family.

To this day, Katniss associates Peeta with the dandelion that gave her hope. She always meant to thank him, but now it won't seem very sincere, since he will be one of her competitors in the arena. She decides that the odds are that someone else will kill him first—though the odds haven't been very reliable lately.

The fact that many people starve to death in District 12 highlights the social differences in Panem. Some people have more than enough to eat, while others can't even count on having enough to stay alive.



Peeta's mother has no sympathy for beggars, showing that she doesn't understand the plight of those who have less than she does. She's unwilling, even, to relinquish scraps to Katniss.



Peeta receives a punishment from his mother in order to toss bread loaves to Katniss. It's an act of self-sacrifice and compassion that Katniss will always remember because it's so rare throughout the district. She also comes to feel like she owes a debt to Peeta (a feeling that she, who prides herself on self-sufficiency, hates).



Katniss perseveres even through the hardest times because she knows that she has to take care of her mother and Prim—she perseveres because of love and loyalty. Peeta's act of kindness gave Katniss enough energy and hope to find a means of supporting her family on her own.



Katniss still remembers that she owes her life to Peeta, but she knows that it will seem hypocritical to thank him now. They've been set against each other thanks to the setup of the Hunger Games, in which all tributes must be in it for themselves.



CHAPTER 3

After the ceremony ends, Peeta and Katniss are marched through the front door of the Justice Building and conducted into separate rooms where they wait for their loved ones to visit and say goodbye. Katniss's mother and Prim arrive first and wrap Katniss up in a hug. After a few moments, Katniss begins to tell them all the things they must remember to do now that Katniss won't be there to do them for them. Katniss yells at her mother, making her promise not to go away again like she did after Katniss's father died. Prim makes Katniss promise that she'll try really hard to win, and then time is up, and Peacekeepers are escorting Prim and her mother out the door as they all repeat, "I love you."

Next, Katniss is surprised to see Peeta Mellark's father, the baker, enter the room. He doesn't speak much, but he hands her a package of cookies, a luxury that Katniss's family can usually never afford. As he leaves, he tells Katniss that he'll keep an eye on Prim and make sure she's eating.

After Peeta's father, Madge steps into the room. She urges Katniss to accept a circular gold pin with a bird on it as her token to wear in the arena. Madge makes Katniss promise to wear it, and Katniss agrees. Madge gives her a quick kiss on the cheek before she leaves.

Finally, Gale arrives. He wraps Katniss in his arms and instructs her on what to do once she's in the arena. He tells her she has to get a bow and arrows, or else she has to make her own. Gale says that being in the Games is just like hunting, and Katniss is the best hunter he knows. Katniss starts to protest, but she realizes that it wouldn't be different at all if she could just forget that she's hunting people.

As Gale is dragged out by the Peacekeepers, he promises that he won't let Katniss's family starve. Katniss is taken to the train station, where reporters are swarming with their cameras. Katniss notices that Peeta's face bears visible traces of tears, and she wonders if appearing weak is part of his strategy. After a few minutes, Peeta and Katniss are allowed to board the train, and the train takes off at once.

Even as Katniss is being ripped away from her family she does what she can to try to keep it together. She has sacrificed herself for their sake, and wants to make sure that they survive without her. At the same time, she draws strength from her family. Other tributes will try to win for themselves, to survive. Katniss promises that she'll try to win for Prim. Love motivates her.



Katniss is touched because the baker promises to keep an eye on Prim. He also hands her cookies, and the fact that they're a luxury she could never afford before showcases how different the lives of the merchant class and the rest of the population can be.



Katniss continues to discover that she's made more connections in District 12 than she realized. Madge, for example, seems to think of Katniss as her friend, despite their class differences.



Although Gale and Katniss have never acknowledged how close they are before, the fact that they now have limited time together pushes them to drop some of their pretenses—which is why Katniss doesn't hesitate to embrace Gale when he enters the room.



Katniss is already beginning to adjust to the mindset of the Games, so she doesn't understand why Peeta would allow himself to appear weak. It's possible that Peeta doesn't understand how important appearances are, since he's lived a generally cushier life and hasn't had to worry so much about protecting himself.



The speed of the train takes Katniss's breath away—it can travel at 250 miles an hour. The train is also incredibly fancy, and Katniss and Peeta both get their own chambers that include a bedroom, a dressing area, and a private bathroom with hot and cold running water. Katniss takes her first shower—like summer rain, only warmer—and gets dressed in the clothes provided in their drawers. She remembers Madge's pin and takes a good look at it for the first time, realizing that the bird depicted on it is a **mockingjay**.

Mockingjays are something of a slap in the face to the Capitol. During the rebellion, the Capitol bred a series of genetically altered animals as weapons, called muttations. Among them was a bird called a jabberjay that could memorize and repeat conversations, and these were used to spy on the rebels before they realized how the conversations were being transmitted. Afterwards, the districts used the birds to feed the Capitol a bunch of lies, and the birds were abandoned to die off in the wild. Instead of dying off, however, they mated with mockingbirds, and the resulting species could replicate both bird whistles and human melodies. These are known as mockingjays.

Effie comes to collect Katniss for supper, and they walk into a dining room where Peeta sits waiting. Effie seems relieved by Haymitch's absence. The meal arrives in courses, and Katniss stuffs herself because it's the first time she's had so much good food before her. Effie comments that at least Peeta and Katniss have decent table manners, unlike the pair of tributes that came before them. Katniss takes offence at this comment, since she knows—as Effie can't—that those tributes probably never had enough to eat in their lives. Katniss decides to eat with her hands after that, pointedly wiping her fingers on the tablecloth.

After the meal, Peeta and Katniss go to another compartment to watch a recap of the reappings across Panem. A few stand out to Katniss. There's a boy who volunteers in District 2, a fox-faced girl from District 5, and most upsettingly, a twelve-year-old girl from District 11 who reminds Katniss of Prim. No one volunteers for this girl, however. Then the recap of the reaping in District 12 arrives, and Effie comments that their mentor could learn a lot about televised behavior, a comment which strikes Peeta and Katniss as funny.

They remind Effie that Haymitch was drunk, as he always is—his behavior doesn't just amount to rough manners. Effie snaps that their mentor is their lifeline to the world during the Games and that they should be the last ones laughing at his drunken behavior. As if on cue, Haymitch staggers into the compartment and vomits all over the carpet before falling into the mess. Effie flees the room.

The luxurious facilities in the train underline how big the wealth gap must be in Panem. Katniss has never had enough running water to take a shower, and if she had wanted hot water in District 12, she would have had to boil it herself.



Mockingjays are one example of how the Capitol tried to monitor and control the districts during the rebellion. They also demonstrate how advanced technology must be in the Capitol, since they can genetically alter animals. The differences in technology and supplies likely put the districts at a disadvantage during the rebellion. At the same time, the mockingjays symbolize that while the Capitol seeks to exert total control, sometimes that exertion can backfire in surprising ways.



Effie can't comprehend the reasons behind bad table manners. She lacks the experience and the information necessary to have empathy for those who have grown up hungry, so she can't understand that for some just eating is more important than showing good manners, and so she comes off as extremely callous.



For Effie, as for others in the Capitol, appearances are very important. She's embarrassed by the way Haymitch presents himself on TV because she feels that his actions reflect badly on her as well. Peeta and Katniss find this kind of focus on presentation funny because it's so trivial to them—they don't come from a place where it's that important to present yourself with poise. They worry more about getting enough to eat.



Effie reminds Peeta and Katniss that appearances can be important for what they signify—in this case, Haymitch's carelessness and alcoholism, which should be cause for Peeta and Katniss to worry.



CHAPTER 4

Peeta and Katniss realize that Effie is right about Haymitch as their mentor. They decide to help him to his feet and get him cleaned up. Once they get Haymitch back to his compartment, Peeta offers to do the rest of the cleanup, and Katniss accepts his offer. Afterwards, however, Katniss wonders about Peeta's motivations for being so nice, and she decides that it's because he's being kind—a thought that worries her because kind people have a way of working themselves inside her. She vows not to have any more to do with Peeta and tosses his father's cookies out of the train compartment.

Unfortunately, the cookies land and explode in a patch of dandelions, which reminds Katniss again of the time that Peeta helped save her family from starvation. On that day, Katniss brought Prim with her into the Meadow where they picked a bucket full of dandelion greens, stems, and flowers. That night, they had a dinner of dandelion salad and the rest of the bakery **bread**. Prim and Katniss began poring through a book from their mother's apothecary shop, looking for edible plants and flowers. Finally, Katniss worked up the courage to wander into the woods, where she had never been without her father. She retrieved her bow and arrows and stayed by the edge of the woods, where she had the good luck to kill a rabbit.

Eventually, Katniss wandered deeper and deeper into the woods, finding food to keep her family alive. Soon, on her twelfth birthday, Katniss was also eligible to sign up for tesserae, and she brought home batches of grain and oil with it. One day, late that summer, Katniss was washing up in a pond when she noticed the plants growing around her. She dug out their roots, recognizing them as the plants that she had been named for. That night, Katniss's family feasted on fish and katniss roots until everyone was full for the first time in months. Katniss's mother eventually recovered as well, but Katniss was never able to fully trust her again.

Katniss feels homesick as she thinks of her family, wondering what they might've had for dinner. As Katniss gets into bed, it occurs to her that now would be the best time to cry—no cameras surround her for the moment—but she feels too numb to cry and instead drifts off to sleep.

Effie's voice wakes Katniss in the morning, and she dresses, deciding to keep her hair in the braids her mother did. When Katniss arrives in the dining car, Effie is leaving in an angry huff, and Haymitch gestures for Katniss to sit down. She eats her fill of breakfast food and hot chocolate before settling back to observe Haymitch, who is thinning his red juice with alcohol.

Katniss recognizes the danger of kind people. She knows that Peeta's power lies in his ability to win others over, but there's no room for compassion in the Hunger Games arena, so she chooses to distance herself from Peeta rather than risk becoming sentimental. At the same time, the fact that Katniss is both determined and self-sufficient and can be affected by those who are kind turns out to be her great strength, as her fierce love and loyalty creates bonds between others.



However, Katniss is unable to forget the fact that Peeta has already saved her once before. The reason that she's had enough to eat and that she's so skilled with a bow and arrow is that Peeta tossed her some bread years ago—it's a debt she'll never be able to repay.



Katniss is able to hunt, which means that her family is probably better off than most. However, she's still forced to sign up for tesserae in order to feed her family of three—showing how dire the food situation must be for families that don't have another means of getting food.



Katniss is constantly aware that she cannot let down her guard. Even in the rare moments when she believes she isn't being watched, it's hard for her to relax, since she's holding back her emotions the rest of the time.



Each time they have a meal, Katniss and Peeta stuff themselves because they aren't used to having so much good food before them. Katniss worries about eating her fill before she turns her attention to other issues—like Haymitch.



Katniss realizes she detests Haymitch, believing that he's part of the reason District 12 tributes never stand a chance. Haymitch is unlikely to draw sponsors on their behalf, since the rich people who sponsor tributes expect to have someone classier than Haymitch to deal with.

Katniss asks Haymitch for advice, and his response is, "Stay alive." Then he laughs. Peeta responds aggressively, knocking the glass out of Haymitch's hand, and Haymitch responds by punching Peeta in the jaw. When Haymitch reaches again for his alcohol, Katniss drives her knife into the table between Haymitch's hand and the bottle, barely missing his fingers.

The action seems to finally get Haymitch's attention. He advises Peeta to let his bruised jaw show to make him seem tougher and asks Katniss whether she can hit anything else with her knife. As a demonstration, Katniss throws her knife into the wall across the room, where it lodges into a seam between two panels, making her look a lot better with a knife than she really is.

Haymitch makes a deal with Peeta and Katniss. He says that he'll remain sober enough to help them as long as they don't interfere with his drinking. His first piece of advice is not to resist the choices of the stylists. As Haymitch leaves the compartment, the train pulls into the Capitol, and Peeta and Katniss rush to the window to see what they've only seen on television before. The Capitol's wealth is obvious from the splendor of the buildings. As their train passes by, people wave, and Peeta waves back. When Katniss looks at him, he shrugs and says that one of the people below might be rich, which makes Katniss believe that Peeta has been forming a strategy to stay alive all along and isn't to be trusted.

CHAPTER 5

Katniss follows Haymitch's advice and doesn't resist the prep team who prepare her to see her stylist. They clean her up and remove her body hair. Katniss finds it hard to hate her prep team, even though they're so vain and superficial—they're sincerely trying to help her, in their own way. As the prep team finishes with her, Katniss waits for her stylist to come. The only part of her that's been left untouched are the braids that her mother did for her the day before.

Katniss is coming to realize how important appearances are to rich people. She realizes that one of the reasons District 12 is at a disadvantage is that Haymitch isn't classy enough to network effectively with rich sponsors.



Katniss and Peeta are enraged by Haymitch's advice because he's supposed to be their mentor and lifeline through the Games, yet he approaches the situation like it's a big joke.



Haymitch and Katniss both demonstrate, again, that they understand the value of creating an appearance. Haymitch tells Peeta that he'll appear tougher with a bruise, and Katniss knows that her knife demonstration is her chance to make an impression on Haymitch.



It's impossible for Peeta and Katniss not to gawk at the Capitol's wealth. It's completely different from the poverty they've known all their lives. Katniss believes that she's underestimated Peeta, since his waving seems so calculated. He's aware of how important it is to remain poised and likable in front of the audience.



Katniss and her prep team are from such different worlds that Katniss doesn't even regard them fully as human beings. She also recognizes that their attention to her appearance will help her in the arena, since she's beginning to learn how important appearances are to people in the Capitol.



When her stylist, Cinna, arrives in the room, Katniss is surprised by how natural he looks. The only thing that seems altered on him is the metallic gold eyeliner that he wears. Cinna compliments Katniss's hairstyle as he takes her in. He reveals that he actually volunteered to take District 12—usually a stylist's last choice—but he doesn't say why.

Katniss puts on a robe, and she and Cinna walk into a sitting room, where they sit by a window revealing the city. With a push of a button, Cinna is able to conjure their lunch, a lavish array of chicken and oranges in cream sauce. Katniss tries to imagine how long it would take her to prepare a similar meal at home and concludes that it would take days of hunting and trading, only to create a poor substitution of the dish before her. Cinna watches her as she thinks of this, and when she looks up, he says, "How despicable we must seem to you." Then he changes the topic to address her costume for the opening ceremony.

For the opening ceremonies, it's customary to wear something that represents the district of the tribute. Because District 12 is a mining district, Katniss assumes that she and Peeta will be in some kind of coal mining getup. However, Cinna tells her that he believes the coal mining idea is overdone. Instead, he says, he wants to focus on what people do with coal—they burn it.

A few hours later, Katniss is dressed in a simple black unitard that covers her from ankle to neck, with a fluttering cape made of streams of orange, yellow, and red. Cinna plans to light the cape on fire right before their chariot takes to the streets. He assures Katniss that it isn't real fire, but she remains unconvinced. She and Peeta are nervous as the opening music begins and they await their entrance.

When it's their turn to roll out, Cinna lights the fake flames and gestures for Peeta and Katniss to hold hands. The flames immediately draw the crowd's attention, and they roar Katniss's name as she passes. The chariot finally rolls to a stop before President Snow's mansion, and the president gives the official welcome from his balcony.

When the chariot pulls back into the Training Center, Peeta compliments Katniss on her appearance with the flames, and she decides that part of his strategy is to act likable. She decides to play along, and stands on her tiptoes to give him a kiss on his cheek.

Cinna surprises Katniss because he looks relatively natural. Most stylists in the Capitol dye their hair, skin, or opt for plastic surgery that makes them unrecognizable. Cinna's entire manner, however, is understated.



Katniss's contemplation of the dish before her reveals how different life is in the districts. Whereas in the train, Katniss only focused on stuffing herself with the food in front of her, she now sits back and wonders how she might recreate the dish—and realizes that she wouldn't be able to. The knowledge that there are people in the Capitol who have so much and people in the districts who have nothing is truly sinking in for Katniss.



The fact that each of the tributes wears clothing that represents his or her district emphasizes how divided they are. Each district only specializes in one type of output.



Katniss's costume is fairly simple, despite the pyrotechnics. Instead of dramatically altering their appearance, Cinna makes sure that Katniss and Peeta are recognizable so that the audience will be able to spot them in the arena.



Peeta and Katniss make a strong impression on the audience. They go from being the underdog district to the district that the audience is cheering for throughout the opening ceremony. Having an attractive—and dramatic—appearance makes a big difference for the tributes.



In the atmosphere of the Games, it becomes increasingly difficult to tell which appearances signify the truth and which are calculated, since they are constantly forced to perform for an audience. Although Peeta seems genuine, Katniss decides that his likable manner is probably calculated.



CHAPTER 6

At the training center, each district has an entire floor. Effie has been corralling Peeta and Katniss around, and she says that she's been talking them up to everyone she knows in the Capitol, emphasizing how they've been struggling to overcome the barbarism of their district. However, Effie adds, Haymitch is the only one who can seal sponsor deals for them.

Katniss's quarters are larger than her entire house back home. She experiments with the automatic gadgets, programming the closet to pick an outfit to her taste and conjuring food from an automatic menu until Effie summons her to dinner.

When Katniss arrives, she sees that the stylists will be joining them for dinner in order to strategize about the Games. Haymitch also seems to be pulling himself together, appearing as clean-shaven and sober as Katniss has ever seen him. Katniss also tries her first glass of wine, but decides to switch to water halfway through because she doesn't like the foggy feeling it gives her.

A red-haired girl comes to set a cake on the table, and when Katniss turns to ask her a question, she finds that she recognizes the girl. She blurts this aloud, and the girl looks terrified, shaking her head as she hurries away from the table. When Katniss turns back, the four adults—Haymitch, Effie, Cinna, and his partner, Portia—are watching her carefully. Effie says that the girl is an Avox, someone who has committed a crime. As punishment, their tongues are cut off so that they can't speak. Haymitch says that she was probably a traitor of some sort.

Katniss finally recalls who the girl is, but senses that she should conceal this knowledge. Peeta comes to her rescue, saying that the girl looks like someone they know from school, which helps everyone to relax.

Effie doesn't understand why the people of District 12 don't have proper manners, not realizing that their entire lives are set up differently from hers. As a result, she dismisses them as barbarians. Katniss finds this to be hypocritical, since Effie is helping the Capitol send the tributes to slaughter and that, justifiably, seems much more barbaric to her.



Katniss notices more and more ways in which the Capitol is wealthier than her district. They have better food, more electricity, and more advanced technology.



Haymitch's clean-shaven appearance is encouraging and signals a shift in his behavior. Although he continues to drink, he doesn't do so sloppily, and he tries to remain sober enough to give advice.



Katniss doesn't know what an Avox is because the Capitol prevents people in the districts from knowing details about other districts and the Capitol. This ignorance almost gets Katniss into trouble, since there's no good reason she should know the girl.



Peeta again comes to Katniss's rescue—each time he does this, Katniss is unsure whether he's genuinely trying to help her or whether it's part of his strategy in the arena.



After dinner, the party moves into the sitting room to watch a replay of the opening ceremonies. Haymitch comments that the handholding is the perfect touch of rebellion, which gives Katniss pause. She realizes that the other tributes stood stiffly next to each other, not touching, as if the Games had already begun. Haymitch sends Peeta and Katniss off to get some rest while the adults strategize.

When they're alone, Peeta corners Katniss and asks her about the Avox. Katniss hesitates, and Peeta, sensing her hesitation, suggests that they go up to the roof, where they can see the whole city. He warns her that the wind can be a bit loud though, and Katniss realizes that he means that they can't be recorded up there. Katniss follows Peeta up a flight of stairs to the roof, where they admire the scenery for a minute, before Katniss tells the story of the red-haired girl.

Katniss explains that she and Gale had been hunting in the woods one day, hiding as they waited for game to pass by. Suddenly, all the birds stopped singing at once, and a pair, a boy and a girl, appeared, running as if their lives depended on it. Suddenly, a hovercraft appeared above them, and a net dropped down on the girl, pulling her up, and a spear impaled the boy before he was pulled up to the hovercraft as well. Peeta asks whether the girl saw Katniss, and Katniss responds that she doesn't know—even though she does. The girl had locked eyes with Katniss and called out for help right before the hovercraft appeared.

Katniss believes that the girl and the boy were from the Capitol from the way they were dressed, but she doesn't know where they were going or why they would leave. Peeta blurts out that he would leave the Capitol too and then looks around nervously before covering up his statement with a joke about the quality of food. Then he changes the topic to Gale, asking whether he and Katniss are related. Katniss says that they aren't, and Peeta asks whether Gale went to say goodbye to her after the reaping. Katniss responds that he did, and that Peeta's father visited her too. Peeta seems surprised by this news and says that his father always liked Katniss and her sister. He explains that his father knew Katniss's mother when they were kids.

Because Haymitch understands that the Capitol's control is based on division—turning the districts and tributes against one another—he recognizes that handholding is a sign of rebellion. It shows that Katniss and Peeta are not yet participating in the Games, since they're still appearing in public as a team. The affection they show for each other is defiant, a refusal to be divided by the games, even if it's just an act.



Katniss and Peeta know that there's a good chance they're being monitored at all times, and they're very careful with their appearances as a result. They talk casually, even when they both know that the subject they want to discuss on the roof is a serious one.



Katniss lies when she says that she doesn't know whether the girl saw her—possibly because she doesn't want to appear responsible for the girl's capture, but also because she feels guilty. The past with the Avox is a time when she did not help someone in trouble, when she allowed (justifiable) fear of the Capitol to keep her divided from others.



Peeta is careful to monitor his appearance so that he doesn't seem to be questioning the goodness of the Capitol—he presents himself as a simpler person than he is, which will endear him to the audience. The fact that Peeta's father knew Katniss's mother also makes sense to Katniss because they grew up as part of the same merchant class, showing how the social classes are divided and unequal, even within the district.



Peeta and Katniss return indoors and say goodnight. When Katniss enters her room, the red-haired girl is there, collecting Katniss's discarded clothing from the floor. Katniss wants to apologize to her, but remembers that she isn't to speak to an Avox except to give an order. The girl avoids Katniss's eyes, and Katniss feels ashamed that she didn't try to help the girl in the woods. As Katniss tries to drift off to sleep that night, she wonders whether the redheaded girl will enjoy watching her die in the Games.

Katniss wants to apologize to the redheaded girl, but she knows that she isn't allowed to speak to her except to give orders—another way to assure that people from different classes and groups are divided. Katniss feels like a hypocrite because she just sat there and watched as the girl was captured, much like the Capitol audience will sit and watch her suffer in the Hunger Games in a couple days.



CHAPTER 7

Katniss sleeps fitfully, with nightmares, and when she drags herself into the shower in the morning, she fumbles with the automatic buttons, spraying herself in alternately hot and cold jets of water. She dresses herself in a practical outfit that's been laid out for her and ties her hair in a single braid, before heading down to see if there's food in the dining room.

In a comic scene with the shower buttons, Katniss again demonstrates one of the results of social inequality—she doesn't know how to use all of the automated technology in the Capitol.



Katniss serves herself breakfast and eats while thinking about what Prim and her mother might be doing back home. She wonders whether the opening ceremony gave them any comfort. Haymitch and Peeta arrive to breakfast soon afterwards as well, and Katniss sees that Peeta is once again wearing clothes that match her own. Katniss feels annoyed by the twin act, but she decides to trust Cinna because she respects him. Katniss feels nervous about their first training day, during which she'll meet the other tributes face-to-face. After finishing his breakfast, Haymitch asks whether she and Peeta would like to be trained together or separately. They decide that neither one of them has any secret skills, so they agree to be trained together.

Katniss's thoughts of Prim and her mother make her homesick, but they also motivate her. She wants to give them comfort by performing well. Katniss also finds it annoying that she and Peeta are being forced to look and act like a team, since they'll be trying to kill each other in the arena. She finds this hypocritical.



Haymitch asks them for an assessment of their skills, and Peeta says that he has none. Katniss says that she's okay with a bow and arrow, but Peeta immediately talks her up, saying that she's much better than okay. This annoys Katniss for some reason, and she comments that she's seen Peeta lift hundred-pound bags of flour. They begin to argue, and Peeta reveals that on the day of the reaping, his mother commented that District 12 might finally have a winner—and then he realized that his mother had meant Katniss, not him. Katniss suddenly remembers the day that Peeta threw her the bakery bread, and she realizes that he remembers as well. Peeta says that sponsors will be tripping over each other to help her in the arena, but Katniss is skeptical.

When Peeta says that Katniss is amazing with a bow and arrow and tells her that she shouldn't underestimate her own skills, she becomes annoyed because she feels that Peeta is doing the same. He's underestimating his own strength and ability to wrestle, which makes his comments about her archery skills seem hypocritical.



Haymitch advises Peeta and Katniss to save their special skills for their private sessions with the Gamemakers. While they're practicing with the other tributes, Haymitch advises them to learn new skills. He also orders them to stay together throughout, even though they both begin to protest. He orders them to meet Effie at the elevator for training at ten.

Katniss marches off to her room, angry that she and Peeta are being forced to act amiably towards each other when they'll just have to kill each other in the arena. Katniss is also confused by how much attention Peeta has seemingly paid her over the years, to comment on her hunting skills. When it's ten, Katniss goes to meet Effie and Peeta at the elevator, and together they go to the training rooms, where all the other tributes have already gathered.

The head trainer explains the rules. There will be experts in different skills located around the room, and tributes will be free to wander among the stations. There will be no combative exercise between tributes, but there will be assistants on hand if they care to practice with a partner. As the trainer talks, Katniss observes the other tributes and notes that most of them are larger than her. However, many of them are undernourished, so she has the advantage of a healthy body. The exceptions are the Career Tributes—the ones who have been training their entire lives to fight in the Hunger Games. These tributes come from Districts 1, 2, and 4.

When practice begins, the Career Tributes immediately head to show off their skills, handling deadly weapons. Peeta and Katniss decide to go to the knot-tying station, followed by a camouflage station that Peeta seems to enjoy especially. He admits that he decorates the cakes in the bakery in District 12. The Gamemakers arrive early in the day as well, and observe the tributes as they move from station to station. Each day, the tributes eat lunch together in the same room, and Peeta and Katniss sit together, just like Haymitch ordered.

On the second day of training, Peeta notices that they're being shadowed by Rue, the twelve-year-old girl tribute from District 11. She follows them from station to station, and she reminds Katniss of Prim. On the District 12 floor, Effie and Haymitch have teamed up to tell Katniss and Peeta what to do, and the result is exhausting Peeta and Katniss. When Peeta jokes that someone ought to get Haymitch a drink, Katniss responds that they shouldn't pretend to be friends when no one's around. Peeta wearily agrees.

Haymitch doesn't want Peeta and Katniss to appear too strong when practicing with the other tributes. He would rather they appear weaker so that they aren't targeted at the start of the Games.



One of the things that angers Katniss most is hypocrisy, and she finds it hypocritical that she and Peeta are presenting themselves as a team when they'll be trying to kill each other in the arena.



Katniss notices that it's possible to tell which of the tributes came from wealthier districts based on how nourished their bodies look. This is just one more advantage that the Career tributes have when going into the arena—they're also trained to be deadly and often have many sponsors helping them once the Games begin.



Peeta's affinity for camouflage isn't just limited to paint— he's great at adapting to situations with different people as well. He's able to appear tougher when he needs to—like he does with Haymitch—and he's able to appear likable and funny in front of the Capitol audience.



Katniss is unnerved by how much Rue reminds her of Prim, and she's afraid that being sentimental and making this connection will hurt her in the arena. Meanwhile, in her relationship with Peeta, Katniss is afraid that she'll confuse what's real with what's for show, so she decides that they shouldn't have anything to do with each other outside of training.



On the third training day, the Gamemakers start to call the tributes out of lunch for their private sessions. District 12 goes last, and by the time it's Katniss's turn, she realizes that the Gamemakers are bored already and no longer paying attention. She performs a series of excellent shooting, but when she turns around, she sees that the Gamemakers are more preoccupied with a roast pig that has just arrived at their banquet table. Furious, Katniss shoots an arrow straight at the table, through the apple in the pig's mouth, pinning it to the wall.

Katniss is angry that the Gamemakers aren't paying attention and act like the tributes are beneath them. In their callousness, they definitely don't seem morally superior to people from the districts. They're more focused on food and luxury—signified by the roast pig—than on the lives of the people before them. That Katniss shoots at the Gamemakers is an indication of the danger she poses to the Capitol: while other tributes seem to be focused on winning the Games and killing each other, Katniss's anger results in her often directing her efforts not just against the other tributes but, in fact, directly at the Capitol.



CHAPTER 8

As Katniss strides back to her room, she begins sobbing, terrified that the Gamemakers will punish her family for her rash behavior. Haymitch and Effie try to fetch Katniss from her room, but she tells them both to go away and remains curled up in bed. As more time passes, however, it begins to seem less likely that the Gamemakers will punish her for her actions in a public manner. She concludes that they will probably just give her an extremely low score on the training sessions so that no one will sponsor her. The scores, between one and twelve, offer a starting point for people who are betting on who might win the Hunger Games.

Katniss's most intense fear is that her actions will cause her family to get hurt. They're her motivation for playing along with the games in the Capitol and trying to stay alive.



When Effie calls Katniss down to dinner, Katniss decides to go. Everyone is seated at the table, including Cinna and Portia, and for a while, the adults talk about the weather. Finally, Haymitch announces that there's been enough small talk and demands to know how bad Peeta and Katniss were at the private sessions. Peeta reveals that the Gamemakers paid no attention to him, so he just threw around some heavy objects until they said he could go.

Katniss is relieved to hear that the Gamemakers provoked Peeta as well with their lack of consideration and hypocrisy. They pay no attention to the tributes whose lives are in their hands, even though they pretend they're morally superior and better than the people from the districts.



Finally, Katniss reveals what she did in the private session, and everyone at the table stops eating. She asks whether her family will be punished, and Haymitch says it's unlikely, since they'd then have to make the contents of the private training open to the public, which isn't allowed. Katniss realizes she feels better and begins eating her dinner. Afterwards, everyone heads to the sitting room to watch the scores announced on television. The Career Tributes score in the eight-to-ten range, while most of the others average a five. Peeta receives an eight, and then when it's Katniss's turn, she receives the highest score of eleven, shocking everyone in the room. Peeta and Katniss congratulate each other awkwardly before heading to bed.

Katniss begins to feel better after Haymitch assures her that her family will probably be safe, since she's more concerned about their wellbeing than her own. The training scores divide the tributes by making them feel competitive with each other—but Peeta and Katniss still congratulate each other despite the circumstances, demonstrating that they do have a somewhat amiable relationship. Katniss's ranking of an eleven could indicate many things: that the Gamemakers truly recognize her skill, or that they are trying to punish her for shooting at them by putting a target on her back by ranking her highest.



In the morning, Katniss imagines what Gale might be doing back home. She recalls the first time she met Gale, around six months after she started hunting and foraging in the woods. Gale and Katniss began to teach each other their different skills, and then one day became a team, working together to feed their families. She compares her comfortable, trusting relationship with Gale to the relationship she pretends to have with Peeta and realizes it's not a fair comparison because of the circumstances. Effie calls to Katniss to get ready for the day, and Katniss remembers that the televised interviews are the following night. She gets dressed and heads to the dining room for breakfast, noticing that Effie, Haymitch, and Peeta are talking in hushed tones around the table. When she asks about their current strategy, Haymitch reveals that Peeta has asked to be coached separately.

Katniss's trusting relationship with Gale is built on mutual need. They rely on each other to feed their families. With Peeta, however, they're divided by the circumstances and rules of the Games, no matter how friendly they might become. One person's survival in the Games means everyone else's death, so it's difficult to be anything but divided. Peeta's request to be coached separately seems to indicate that he senses the same thing.



CHAPTER 9

Katniss feels betrayed at first, but she realizes that she and Peeta will soon be trying to kill each other in the Games anyway. Katniss spends four hours training with Effie on presentation, learning to smile more and walk in high heels, before she moves on to train with Haymitch for content. Haymitch tries to find an angle for Katniss, but she's unable to pull off witty, charming, funny, humble, etc. Finally, he gives up and tells her just to try not to reveal how openly she despises her audience.

Katniss resents Peeta for wanting to train separately, but she also realizes that that's the nature of the Games—they're meant to be competitors, not teammates. Effie and Haymitch both work on essentially the same thing: how Katniss will present herself. How she appears during her interview can make a big difference in how many sponsors she can get.



In frustration, Katniss smashes all the plates in her room that night, and the red-haired girl is surprised when she enters to see the mess. Katniss tells her that she regrets not trying to save the girl, but the girl motions for her to be quiet before cleaning up the mess and tucking Katniss into bed.

The redheaded girl seems to forgive Katniss with her gestures. Their unlikely relationship is another sort of rebellion in the face of the Capitol, since an Avox's punishment is that she should never be able to talk and form troublesome relationships with others again.



In the morning, the prep team gets Katniss ready for her interview. Cinna has designed a dress for her that's made out of gems, fashioned to look like flames. He advises her to be herself for the interview, to pretend that she's answering the questions for a friend. He says that Katniss will be able to see him on the main platform during the interview and that she should pretend to address her answers to him.

Cinna helps Katniss get ready for her interview. He designs a beautiful dress that will make an impression and tries to get her to relax. He and Katniss have also become friends—another unlikely friendship, considering that he's a stylist from the Capitol and she's a tribute from District 12. Though the fact that he chose to work with District 12 suggests that he sees something in Katniss, that his sympathies are with her.



The tribute interviews begin, and Caesar Flickerman, the talk show host who's conducted the Hunger Games interviews for the past forty years, is spending three minutes with each tribute. When it's Katniss's turn, she's extremely nervous but tries to be honest as Cinna advised her to be. When Caesar asks her what's impressed her most about the Capitol, Katniss responds that the lamb stew with the dried plums has been her favorite. She also shows off her costume, twirling for the audience. The interview concludes with Katniss repeating her promise to Prim, that she will try extremely hard to win.

When it's Peeta's turn to interview with Caesar, Peeta makes several jokes that get the audience laughing. Caesar asks whether Peeta has a girlfriend back home, and Peeta shakes his head unconvincingly. Peeta admits that there is one girl he's liked ever since he can remember, but his feelings have always been unrequited. Caesar assures Peeta that if he wins the Games, the girl won't refuse him—but Peeta reveals that winning won't help because the girl came to the Games with him.

CHAPTER 10

The crowd grows upset, sympathetically murmuring after Peeta's admission. Katniss is shocked and looks down to avoid the cameras. After the tributes return to their floors, Katniss sees Peeta and shoves him into an urn, which shatters and bloodies Peeta's hands. She says that he had no right to say those things about her. When the other doors open and the adults arrive, Haymitch pins Katniss against a wall, telling her that Peeta has done her a favor by making her look desirable. Realizing that Haymitch is right, Katniss apologizes to Peeta for shoving him.

The group sits down to dinner and afterwards watches the interviews as they air on television. Then it's time for them to say their goodbyes, since the next morning, Peeta and Katniss will enter the arena. Effie actually has tears in her eyes, and Haymitch again repeats his advice to stay alive. When Katniss goes to bed, however, she realizes that she's unable to sleep. She heads to the roof where she finds Peeta standing on the edge, watching the celebrations in the city below.

Because the interviews are so short, appearances are very important. It's crucial that a tribute makes an impression quickly. Katniss's most memorable moment is when she thinks of her little sister, Prim—it brings back her determination to win for her family.



Peeta's revelation that he loves Katniss causes the Capitol to see the tributes in a different, humanizing light. The audience now sees how they might relate to two star-crossed lovers, rather than focusing on the differences of their social class.



Although Katniss doesn't realize it yet, Peeta's decision to cast them in the light of star-crossed lovers is also an act of defiance. It shows the Capitol that there's still room for him to care about a person other than himself—and not only another person, but a competitor in the Games. It also earns the sympathy of the audience, who might be more upset and less entertained by Peeta's and Katniss's deaths.



In just a short time, Katniss and Peeta have formed more relationships—with Effie, Haymitch, and their stylists. These are people who will now view the Games differently, since they've gotten to know the tributes involved.



Peeta starts to talk about how he's trying to avoid becoming one of the Capitol's pawns—how he wants to maintain his identity, even in the Games. This rubs Katniss the wrong way, and she snaps at Peeta before turning and heading back to her room. She sleeps fitfully for the remaining hours and then Cinna comes to see her before dawn, giving her a simple shift to wear before she dons her costume outside the arena. Cinna takes her to the roof, where a hovercraft appears and carries Katniss away. A woman places a metal tracker in Katniss's arm, and then Katniss is released to eat breakfast.

When the hovercraft lands, Cinna and Katniss find themselves in a room below the arena, where Katniss changes into the outfit she will wear. Cinna hands her the token Madge gave her, which he retrieved from one of the outfits Katniss wore on the train. Katniss fastens the token on her shirt, and then she and Cinna wait for the call that will signal the beginning of the Games. Cinna holds one of her hands in both of his, and they wait without speaking until it's time for Katniss to enter the arena. Cinna tells her that if he could bet, his money would be on her. Then Katniss is enclosed in a glass cylinder that begins to rise, and for a minute, her eyes are dazzled by the sunlight—before she hears the announcer's voice signaling the start of the Games.

CHAPTER 11

The tributes are forced to stand on their mounds for sixty seconds before they may enter the arena—otherwise, a bomb will detonate and blow off their legs. In the center of the arena lies the Cornucopia, a giant golden horn that contains survival tools like tents and weapons. Haymitch had advised Peeta and Katniss to avoid the Cornucopia and instead run for safety, but Katniss hesitates when she sees the bow and arrows that lie in the Cornucopia.

Just as she prepares to run for the weapons, she catches Peeta's eye, and he seems to be shaking his head at her. When the gong rings out, Katniss misses the moment to dash for the Cornucopia and instead grabs a nearby sheet of plastic and a loaf of **bread**. She's angry about missing the moment and dashes farther in to grab a backpack, but another boy reaches it at the same time, and they grapple before another girl kills him. The girl aims another knife at Katniss, but Katniss runs and hitches her pack over her head, where the knife lodges itself. Katniss jogs and walks farther into the woods for the next few hours, putting distance between herself and her competitors.

Peeta's concern with remaining himself during the Games makes Katniss ashamed of her own selfish preoccupations at first—but then she becomes annoyed because she believes that Peeta's words are hypocritical, since he's going to kill others during the Games anyway.



All of Katniss's goodbyes reveal people who care about her. When she left District 12, Madge and Peeta's dad surprised her, and now, when she's getting ready to enter the arena, she finds that she and Cinna have grown closer.



The tributes are divided by the rules of the Games, which dictate that they must kill each other to survive. The Cornucopia, however, lures everyone to the same place at the start of the Games, resulting in a bloodbath.



Katniss is frustrated that she missed her moment—and her frustration makes her careless, dashing farther into the fray. She also feels angry towards Peeta, who she blames for her hesitation. Even Katniss's brief hesitation results in her almost getting a knife in the head.



Katniss begins to feel better as she walks farther into the woods, even though there's no sign of water yet. In the late afternoon, canons sound to signal the tributes who have died in the morning. There are eleven dead, leaving thirteen to play. In a few hours, the Gamemakers will project images of the dead in the night sky so that everyone can know who died. Katniss finds herself overwhelmed by the thought that Peeta might already be dead, though she tells herself it might be better, since it means that she won't be the one to kill him herself.

Katniss examines the contents of her pack, finding a sleeping bag and some crackers and dried beef. She also finds an empty water bottle, which reminds her of how dire her water situation might become. For the moment, she sets a couple snare traps before settling into a willow tree for the night. Soon, the anthem that precedes the death recap begins to play, and Katniss notes with relief that Peeta is still alive. She tells herself that if she loses, it will be most beneficial to her family if Peeta wins.

Katniss dozes off only to be awakened a few hours later by the sound of branches snapping below her. Another tribute has started to make a fire, which infuriates Katniss because it is sure to reveal their destination. As dawn arrives, Katniss thinks that perhaps the fire-starter has gone unnoticed, but then she hears the footsteps of the Career Tributes, and the pleading of a girl before she's killed. The Career Tributes often band together at the start of the Games, before the tension becomes too great and they start to turn on each other.

The pack starts to walk away, but they pause beneath Katniss's tree, worried that the girl they left behind isn't dead yet. One voice says that he'll go finish her off, and Katniss is shocked to recognize the voice as Peeta's.

CHAPTER 12

When Peeta runs back to finish off the girl, Katniss overhears the Career Tributes discussing whether they should kill him or not. It seems that they're keeping Peeta with them because they hope that he'll lead them to Katniss. When Peeta returns and the pack heads off, Katniss rolls out of her tree. She realizes that the cameras will be focusing on her after she overheard the Career Tributes talking, and she decides to pretend that she's one step ahead of the game, smiling knowingly.

Katniss worries about Peeta, since she's gotten to know him more over the course of training. However, rather than dwell on the thought that he might be dead, Katniss decides that his early death might be better because of the way the Games are set up—at least she wouldn't be directly responsible for his death. It seems that Katniss and Peeta could have been good friends, but the Games prevent them from becoming too close.



Although Katniss continually accused Peeta of pretending to act like her friend, it seems more like Katniss is pretending that she doesn't genuinely care for Peeta. She makes excuses for thinking about him, telling herself that she only cares about his survival because it will benefit her family. In this way, Katniss's actions are somewhat hypocritical. She seems to be fighting to not care about Peeta because she thinks that is the only way to survive. But thinking that way is to play the Capitol's game.



The alliances that the Career tributes form require a certain amount of hypocrisy, since they'll eventually have to turn on each other in order to win the Games. The fact that the strongest tributes tend to band together also emphasizes the social inequalities between districts. The strong ones become stronger by banding together, and the weaker districts are weeded out.



Katniss believes that Peeta is a complete hypocrite now, since he was talking about defying the Gamemakers the night before and has now joined the cruelest group of tributes in the arena.



Katniss knows that it's important that the audience doesn't see that she's flustered, so she appears poised instead. She gives the audience something to guess at, since she knows that the Games are just entertainment for them, and the more suspense there is, the more exciting they'll find the show.



Before Katniss leaves the area, she checks her snare traps and finds one rabbit. She returns to the dead girl's fire to warm the rabbit meat on the remaining coals, which are still hot, and she uses the ashes to camouflage her backpack before heading off in the opposite direction of the other tributes. Her top priority is finding water. As the day goes on, Katniss grows more and more desperate for water but still isn't able to locate any. She almost devours some berries for their moisture before she realizes that they're unfamiliar to her and could be poisonous.

By the next day, Katniss is desperate for water and angry that Haymitch hasn't sent her any. She believes she must have sponsors who want to send her some water. It occurs to Katniss that perhaps she's close to finding some, and this is the reason Haymitch is withholding it, but by afternoon, she believes she's reached the end of her abilities. As she collapses and drifts off, Katniss realizes that she's lying on mud, and she hurriedly follows it to a small pond, where she drinks and fills her water bottle. That evening, there are no deaths to show, and Katniss drifts off to sleep in her sleeping bag, only to be awakened before dawn by a wall of fire descending upon her.

CHAPTER 13

Katniss grabs her sleeping bag, which contains her backpack and water bottle, and runs. However, Katniss is unable to run fast enough, and the smoke starts to overpower her. She has to stop for a moment to vomit and recover, noting that the flames around her are man-made. Too uniform to be natural, the flames are likely created by the Gamemakers to bring the tributes together so that the viewers in the Capitol will have more action to watch. Suddenly, fireballs begin to shoot at Katniss, and she tries to move away from the area where the launchers must be located. When it finally seems like they've stopped, she pauses to take a break—but then another fireball shoots, and she's not fast enough to dodge. It hits her calf, and she grabs at her leg, causing her to burn her hands as well. Afterwards, the fireballs really do stop.

Katniss finds herself near a pond, where she allows the water to cool her burns. Exhausted by the day and unwilling to move from the soothing water, Katniss reorganizes her belongings and falls asleep. She awakens when she hears the Career pack approaching and runs to a nearby tree, which she begins to climb. By the time the Careers arrive, Katniss is twenty feet above them in the tree. She taunts them, realizing that she's lighter than all of them and a much better climber. A couple of the Careers attempt to go up after her, but none of them can make it.

Katniss's suspicion of the berries reflects her wariness of other surface appearances as well. She has a hard time believing anything Peeta says, for example, and it took much longer for her to relax around Gale than vice versa.



Katniss's suspicion of surface appearances is to her benefit here. She realizes that Haymitch might be sending her a message by refusing to send her a sponsor gift. As a result, she keeps walking and stumbles across the pond herself, without having to use up precious sponsor funding. Katniss and Haymitch have a kind of second sense of each other, and both realize that they can communicate both through what is communicated and what isn't.



Like the Cornucopia, the wall of fire is meant to draw the tributes together for a confrontation. While the rules of the Games divide the tributes, the organization of the arena draws them together. This is because the Capitol audience hypocritically demands real pain and suffering from the tributes for entertainment while lacking authentic suffering in their own lives.



Although Katniss is frightened that the Careers have her cornered, she acts nonchalant because she's aware that the audience is watching the confrontation, and she wants to give off the impression that she has a plan.



Katniss settles in for the night, aware that the Careers are still waiting below the tree for her. Her burns are also hurting her severely, and she doesn't know what to do. As she looks around her, she spots a pair of eyes in the trees and realizes that they belong to Rue. Rue quietly points at something above Katniss's head.

Rue reveals her hiding spot to Katniss in order to point something out, showing that she trusts Katniss, despite the fact that they're in the arena together. Katniss has inspired trust and friendship in Rue.



CHAPTER 14

Katniss realizes that Rue is pointing at what looks like a wasp nest above Katniss's head, but Katniss suspects that they're no ordinary wasps. She believes that the nest belongs to tracker jackers, more mutations from the Capitol. A single tracker jacker sting can swell to the size of a plum and cause hallucinations—several stings can kill a person. The tracker jackers also track down those who have disturbed their nest—hence the name tracker jacker. The smoke from the fire seems to have subdued them for now.

Rue's decision to reveal the location of the tracker jacker nest to Katniss probably saves Katniss's life, since just a few stings could kill her. In a game where the object is to kill everyone else, the fact that Rue saves Katniss is very surprising.



Katniss devises a plan to cut down the branch on which the nest hangs. She believes that dropping the nest on the Career pack will be her only chance of escape. She begins to saw at the branch while the evening's anthem plays, allowing the music to cover up the sound of her sawing. When the music stops, Katniss decides to cut the rest in the morning. When she returns to her spot in the branches below, she discovers that Haymitch has sent her a pot of ointment to treat her burns. The ointment must have cost a fortune and is extremely efficient, offering immediate relief. Katniss dozes off to sleep.

Haymitch wisely saves the sponsor funds for burn ointment rather than the water Katniss wished for earlier. The fact that Katniss has enough sponsors to fund such an expensive gift, however, also shows that Peeta was right about her having an effect on people. She's managed to elicit compassion from many sponsors.



When Katniss awakens in the morning, she sees that all of the members of the Career pack have drifted off to sleep. She decides to execute her plan but warns Rue before she cuts the rest of the branch that holds the tracker jacker nest. As she saws, she notices that the tracker jackers are beginning to recover from the smoke and are already leaving their nest. As the branch crashes down, three of the tracker jackers find her and sting her, and the rest attack the Career pack. Two of the Careers seem like they won't survive the attack, including Glimmer, the girl who has the bow and arrows from the Cornucopia. The rest run in the direction of the lake. Katniss flees in the opposite direction, but returns when she remembers the weapons.

Katniss returns the favor and warns Rue that she's going to disturb the tracker jacker nest. Glimmer is one of the Careers who get the worst of the tracker jacker attack, and although she was presented as the most attractive tribute during the interview process, the tracker jacker stings have made her unrecognizable.



Katniss is hallucinating severely because of the tracker jacker stings, and the trees around her seem to be spinning when she returns. She tries to pry the bow from Glimmer's hands, but the flesh looks like it's melting away, and Katniss recoils in horror. Finally, she's able to obtain the bow and arrows, but then someone else comes rushing through the branches with a spear aimed for her. Katniss registers that it's Peeta. Suddenly, Peeta is urging her to run, and she does, but not before she sees a fearsome Career named Cato arriving at the scene as well, with his sword drawn.

Katniss continues to hallucinate as she stumbles away, vaguely aware that someone—possibly she—is screaming. Finally, she trips and lands in a place that seems to be filled with orange bubbles. Her final thought is that Peeta Mellark saved her life.

CHAPTER 15

The tracker jacker venom causes Katniss to have nightmares about Prim and her father getting hurt, as well as having her own body torn apart. Once the venom fades, however, and Katniss finally comes to, she doesn't know how many days have passed. She tastes a honeysuckle, which reminds her of her hunting days with Gale—but suddenly, she's reminded that Peeta may have saved her life by telling her to run. She can't understand why he would do that, and instead focuses her thoughts on the fact that she now has a bow and arrows.

Katniss sips her water and puts more ointment on her burns, realizing that she needs to search for water again. As she looks, she shoots a rabbit that crosses her path. Katniss comes across a stream that's warm enough for her to bathe in, so she washes her clothing and hair after refilling her water bottle. Then she follows the water upstream, looking for game. She kills a type of bird she doesn't recognize, but it looks edible. Katniss makes a fire around late afternoon and puts it out before dusk, warming the plucked bird over the hot coals. Katniss hears a twig snap behind her and whirls around, finding Rue hiding behind a tree trunk.

Katniss's hallucinations are a literal manifestation of her inability to distinguish appearances for actual intentions (in her relationship with Peeta, for example). Appropriately, Peeta appears in the scene to save her again, defending her from Cato. His loyalty to Katniss defies the setup of the Games, and suggests that his professed love for her is real and not just a ploy.



Peeta has defied Katniss's expectations by saving her life. She still doesn't understand what aspects of their relationship have been pretend and what's been real.



When Katniss wakes, she's still confused as to why Peeta would risk his own life to save her. The thought doesn't compute with her knowledge of the Games and survival.



Rue has followed Katniss to this spot, and their earlier friendly exchange seems to hint that they can trust each other.



Katniss smiles and offers to make an alliance with Rue. She also offers Rue some meat, and in exchange, Rue helps Katniss treat her tracker jacker stings with a type of leaf. Katniss also shares her ointment with Rue, and as they eat, Rue reveals more about District 11. Although they're the district that produces most of the food, they're never allowed to eat the crops themselves, and the officials are much stricter there than they are in District 12. Public whippings are a common occurrence.

Katniss decides that she wants Rue for an ally, even though Rue appears to be one of the weaker tributes due to her size. Katniss can see strength where others cannot, and she also can't stop herself from wanting to protect the weak. Katniss also learns more about Rue's district. She didn't know anything about it before, since the Capitol makes sure that the districts don't know very much about each other. She learns that Rue's district is very poor as well and that they also struggle to get enough to eat, even though they're the district that provides most of the food.



Rue and Katniss lay out their food and materials to share, and Rue recognizes the strange sunglasses from Katniss's pack that Katniss dismissed for being useless in the sun. Rue says that the glasses are used to see at night. Katniss offers to share her sleeping bag at night, and Rue gratefully accepts the offer. That night, as the anthem plays, Katniss asks Rue how many other tributes have died and reveals that Peeta saved her life the other night. Rue responds that two tributes died from the tracker jacker stings, and the other Careers are recovering by the lake, but Peeta isn't among them. He may have had to flee after helping Katniss.

Rue and Katniss share both supplies and information. Katniss, for example, didn't know what the night vision glasses were for until Rue told her. By compiling their skills and knowledge, they become more powerful—which is exactly why the Capitol usually keeps the districts apart. Katniss is also still focused on the fact that Peeta saved her the other night.



Rue believes that the Careers are too strong to defeat—they have all the supplies and can't go hungry. This helps Katniss formulate a plan. She tells Rue that they'll have to change the Careers' food situation.

In this situation, the fact that the Careers have always been well fed may be to Katniss and Rue's advantage. If they're able to destroy the Careers' food stash, they can put the Career's into an unfamiliar situation of hunger. They can turn the Career's strength into a weakness.



CHAPTER 16

Rue falls asleep immediately after snuggling into the sleeping bag with Katniss, and Katniss feels similarly that she can trust Rue. Katniss falls asleep as well, and she wakes to the sound of a cannon firing. They can't tell who the dead tribute is until nightfall, however. Katniss gathers information about the Careers' food situation from Rue, who's been to spy on the Career pack's camp by the lake. Katniss is certain that the Careers will struggle with staying alive once their food supply is destroyed.

Rue and Katniss seem to trust each other wholeheartedly. For Katniss, this is in part because Rue reminds her of Prim. Katniss also believes that the key to defeating the Careers is to destroy their food supply, which they need to stay alive because they don't know how to forage and hunt for their own food—they've always led relatively privileged lives and don't know how to go hungry.



Rue and Katniss formulate a plan that involves Rue distracting the Careers by creating a series of fires and Katniss sneaking up on the Careers' camp while they're away. Rue teaches Katniss a four-note melody in case she can't get back to the camp in time. If she sings it, the **mockingjays** in the area will pick it up and the other person will know that the other is safe, even if she hasn't made it back to their meeting place.

Rue and Katniss bond further over the mockingjay pin, which reminds Katniss of her father and also reminds Rue of home. It is significant that the pin also symbolizes the fact that the Capitol doesn't have quite as much control as it wants its subjects to think it does. They work as a team to dismantle the Careers' food stash.



Katniss heads off to spy on the Careers and notices that their setup is very strange. She doesn't understand why they have the boy from District 3 guarding their supplies, for example—he's scrawny and wasn't particularly notable during training. The food is also displayed in the open. After the Careers leave the site, distracted by Rue's fire, Katniss is about to reveal her position when she notices that Foxface—the girl from District 5—has appeared and is doing a strange dance towards the food.

At one point, Foxface trips and squeals in terror, but when nothing happens, she continues towards the supplies, retrieving a bit from different packs of food, but not enough that it will be noticed. Then Foxface retreats, following the same pattern. Katniss realizes that the land around the food must be mined with explosives, explaining the presence of the boy from District 3—he comes from a factory district where they manufacture such things.

Katniss tries to decide what she should do about the knowledge. If she sends off only one arrow, she might only set off one explosion, leaving the food intact and revealing her own position. She then notices a sack of apples and realizes that she can set off a chain of explosions if she can create a large enough hole in the bag. Katniss sends off a series of three arrows, and then the apples tumble out of the bag, and she's thrown back by the explosion.

CHAPTER 17

When Katniss is able to crawl away from the explosion, she sees that it's successfully blown the Careers' food stash to bits. She tries to escape before they return, but she finds that she's too dizzy to do anything but crawl. Katniss is unable to hear, and her left ear is bleeding. She drags herself into some bushes just as the Careers arrive and see the wreckage. Cato is furious and takes it out on the boy from District 3, killing him in a headlock.

As usual, surface appearances seem to conceal something deeper, and Katniss is trying to find out what that might be. As she wonders, she sees Foxface, who also turns out to be more than she appears. Even though she's kept a low profile, Foxface proves to be very clever, and Katniss realizes that she shouldn't underestimate her as an opponent.



Katniss watches Foxface to discover the truth behind the strange appearance of the Careers' camp, and she finally realizes that Foxface is being so careful about where she steps because the area is mined.



Katniss's plan is perfect because it destroys the food without revealing her location. It appears as if the mines were simply wired badly and malfunctioned when someone wandered upon the Careers' stash.



The Careers are furious because they know that they'll have trouble surviving without their food stash. Their more privileged backgrounds meant that they never had to learn how to gather their own meals or how to go hungry when enough food wasn't available. Hypocrisy also comes into play because as soon as the Careers face tension, their alliance with the boy from District 3 collapses, and they're willing to kill their own ally.



The Careers retreat to the lake to wait for the anthem that will announce the dead tributes. They see that only two more have died, meaning that the bomber of their stash is still alive. They light a torch and head into the woods to hunt for the bomber. Katniss, meanwhile, dons her night vision glasses and snacks on some of the greens and nuts that she and Rue gathered. She wonders how Rue is doing—whether she's worried—but at least they each know that the other is alive because neither of their faces appeared after the anthem. Katniss also worries about Peeta—she overheard Cato mention that he'd stabbed Peeta earlier. Finally, Katniss settles into the bushes for a cold night, having left her sleeping bag with Rue.

In the morning, Katniss awakens to hear laughter and realizes that she has hearing back in her right ear. The laugh belongs to Foxface, who's standing among the wreckage. She seems too sly for Katniss to ask her to be an ally. Foxface suddenly stops laughing and runs away from the site as if frightened. Katniss decides that this is a sign for her to leave as well and heads back towards the stream.

Katniss follows the stream back to the site where she said she would meet Rue. Her left ear is still deaf, and she worries that it won't recover. When Katniss reaches the site, she sees that it's still undisturbed, which worries her. Katniss settles into a tree near the site to wait for Rue as she daydreams about food, feeling hungry and finishing off the rest of her supply.

By late afternoon, Katniss decides to look for Rue. She finds the site of the third fire that Rue was supposed to light and sees that it's been set up but remains unlit. Assuming this means that Rue ran into trouble along the way, Katniss goes to search for her. She hears some **mockingjays** singing Rue's four-note melody and sings it back. Suddenly, Katniss hears a child's scream, and she runs towards the voice, breaking into a clearing to see Rue entangled in a net, reaching for her just as a spear enters Rue's body.

CHAPTER 18

Katniss shoots the boy who speared Rue, killing him immediately. She runs to Rue but sees that the wound is beyond healing. Katniss tells Rue that she destroyed the Careers' food stash, and she promises Rue that she will win the Games for both of them. Rue asks Katniss to sing something for her, and Katniss chokes back tears as she sings Rue a mountain tune from District 12.

Even as the Games become more brutal and cutthroat for some of the other tributes, Katniss is developing more ties. When she finds herself alone with time to think, she worries about both Rue and Peeta, even though they're technically her competitors. Her emotional ties to these two represent a disregard for the rules of the Hunger Games, and the danger that she poses to the Capitol.



Katniss again realizes that appearances cannot be taken at face value. Foxface, for example, is cleverer than she first appeared to be—so Katniss decides to trust Foxface's instincts and leaves the area when she does.



When she's alone, Katniss forces herself to keep moving—but for Rue's sake, she's willing to stop and stick around in a tree to wait for her. Her alliance, unlike the Careers' alliance with the boy from District 3, is based on loyalty and actual friendship rather than necessity.



Katniss doesn't care that she might give herself away by running to Rue—she's only worried about Rue. Her compassion for others is what distinguishes her from some of the other tributes in the Games, and it's the reason the Capitol finds her dangerous—because she can forge bonds with others even when the Capitol is trying to keep them divided.



Although Katniss normally doesn't like to sing, she does so because it's Rue's last request. The fact that she's mourning for Rue shows the audience that Rue is worth caring about—is a person worthy of respect—and highlights the cruelty of the Hunger Games for an audience that usually only sees their entertainment factor.



Rue dies, and Katniss finally understands what Peeta meant that night he talked about wanting to show the Capitol that he's more than a pawn in their games. Katniss decides to make a wildflower wreath for Rue so that it will have to be broadcast to everyone who watches the Hunger Games when her body is collected.

Afterwards, Katniss wanders aimlessly and is about to make a camp in a tree when another silver parachute lands. She's confused as to what it might hold, since she's not in need of anything particular from sponsors right now, but when she checks the parachute, she finds a loaf of **bread** from District 11, Rue's district. She can't imagine how many people would have had to do without in order to scrape up enough money to send this loaf, and Katniss thanks District 11 aloud so that they'll know she appreciates the gesture.

Katniss settles into her tree, eats the bread from District 11 and dozes, dreaming of Rue. She dreams that Rue is alive and singing to her. When Katniss wakes up in the morning, she feels groggy and unwilling to move, but she remembers that she must continue on for Prim's sake. Katniss hunts some more birds, building a fire to attract the other contestants, but no one takes the bait.

Katniss replenishes her water and settles into another tree for the night but can't stop thinking about the boy she killed. She realizes that he was her first direct kill. As she attempts to settle into sleep, trumpets sound, announcing a change to the rules. Two tributes from the same district will now be allowed to win if they're the last two to survive the Games. Before Katniss realizes what she's doing, she calls for Peeta.

CHAPTER 19

Katniss immediately regrets calling Peeta's name, but then she realizes that there's almost no one left to be afraid of. She instructs herself to go back to sleep and search for Peeta in the morning. When she wakes, she's extra-cautious, knowing that Cato and the others may decide to ambush her as she tracks down Peeta.

Katniss's gesture shows the audience that Rue doesn't exist solely for their entertainment. Her life was also important and worth mourning. Katniss's act is defiant because it forces the Capitol audience to see how unfair their Games are.



From Rue's descriptions of District 11, Katniss realizes that the people of District 11 probably had to sacrifice money they didn't have in order to send her a gift. Because she understands how little they have, she appreciates the bread even more. This is also the first time in the history of the Games that one district has sent a gift to another district's tribute, which the Capitol might perceive as a threat, since the Capitol maintains control by keeping the districts divided.



As usual, it's Katniss's connection and loyalty to Prim that motivates her to fight harder in the Hunger Games. If she didn't have anything to return to in District 12, it's likely that she wouldn't try as hard to win.



Katniss dwells on the fact that she killed a boy because she realizes that she would be a hypocrite to pretend that his life didn't matter to people in his district—just like the Capitol audience who watch tributes die without thinking twice about their families back home. Katniss's reaction to the announcement also shows that she cares for Peeta and has been concerned for him over the course of the Games. The Gamesmakers have clearly changed the rules to satisfy the audience's desire to see the two "lovers" working together. They are trying to manipulate Katniss and Peeta, perhaps not realizing the true power of love and loyalty.



Forming relationships with other tributes often puts Katniss in more danger, but it also sharpens her sense of caution because she realizes that there is more at stake.



Katniss decides that Peeta must be near a source of water, since he wouldn't be able to survive without it, especially with severe wounds. She follows the stream to a new part of the woods, where there are muddy banks. She fears that she will be vulnerable if Thresh, a powerful tribute from the same district as Rue, or Cato find her in this spot, and she's about to leave when she spies a bloody streak across one of the boulders. She follows the boulders, believing that she's onto something, but when she can't find anything, she gives up. As she starts to walk away, she hears Peeta's voice hoarsely say, "You here to finish me off, sweetheart?"

Katniss looks towards the source of the voice, but she still can't find Peeta and wanders up the side of the bank. Suddenly, Peeta speaks again, and she sees that she's directly above him, and Peeta is remarkably camouflaged. Katniss attempts to move Peeta, but it's evident that the movement is causing him too much pain, so she decides to clean the mud off of him first. She takes a look at his wounds, applying leaves to soothe the tracker jacker stings and giving him medicine for his fever. When she finally looks at the stab wound on Peeta's leg, however, she realizes how severe it is—cutting straight to the bone. She tries to apply the leaves to the festering wound, and pus drains from it. She wraps up the wound again afterwards, but she knows that she hasn't done enough.

Katniss allows Peeta to rest for a bit and then forces him to move, but he can't go far at all. They're forced to settle in the mouth of a nearby cave, where Peeta rests. He refuses to eat, but Katniss gets him to take some medicine for his fever. Peeta thanks Katniss for finding him and begins to talk about what will happen if he can't make it home. In order to hush him, Katniss leans in for a kiss. Peeta finally dozes off.

When Katniss heads outside the cave, she sees that Haymitch has sent another gift—a bowl of broth. It's a clear message to Katniss to keep up the romantic gestures. She heads inside to feed the broth to Peeta, understanding that she needs to act in order to get the sympathy of sponsors.

Katniss endangers herself, walking into an area where she might be vulnerable to attack, so that she can find Peeta. Peeta's skill at camouflage also reflects how adept he is at blending in socially. The fact that he was able to convince the Careers to let him join them is a testament to his skill with manipulating appearances.



Although Peeta's wound looks better after being cleaned up and newly bandaged, Katniss knows that it's extremely severe. Surface appearances do not reflect the deeper truth.



Katniss is manipulative in some ways, realizing that she can get Peeta to do what she asks by showing affection. However, her manipulation also stems from how much she cares about Peeta—she only tricks him so that she can keep him healthy and safe.



Katniss fully realizes how big of a role her appearance will play in getting donations from sponsors. She knows now that it all hinges on her ability to create a convincing romance with Peeta. She is playing at love, while perhaps also feeling the stirrings of it. Peeta, though, is plainly in love.



CHAPTER 20

Katniss feeds Peeta the broth, coaxing and kissing until he finishes it and falls asleep. Katniss then allows herself to eat before settling down to keep watch. The night grows cold quickly, however, and she ends up joining Peeta in the sleeping bag, where she discovers that his fever is getting worse. She places damp bandages on his forehead, hoping it will help. Meanwhile, Katniss tries not to dwell on the fact that she's more vulnerable now that she's teamed up with Peeta.

Katniss prepares a berry mush to feed Peeta for breakfast, and Peeta panics to see that she's gone, worried she's been attacked by Cato during the night. Katniss laughs at his concern and feeds him the mush. Peeta tells Katniss that she should sleep while he keeps watch, and she reluctantly gives in. When Katniss wakes up hours later, she notices that Peeta's fever has gotten worse. She checks his leg wound and finds that he has blood poisoning—which will kill him if it goes untreated. The medicine is likely too expensive for sponsors to afford, so she urges Peeta to stay alive until they win—that's her only hope.

Katniss goes to prepare a soup and when she checks on Peeta again, he asks her to tell him a happy story. At first, Katniss can only think of good memories that involve Gale, but then she decides to talk about how she bought Prim's goat. She changes the facts in order to keep her friends from District 12 safe, however. In the real story, she and Gale managed to shoot a young buck and sold it to the butcher for a lot of money—but in the version Katniss tells Peeta, she says that she sold an old locket of her mother's to get the money. She recalls how she haggled with their market's Goat Man to buy a goat that was very sick. She brought it home, hoping that Prim and her mother could cure it, and they did.

Peeta grows progressively worse, and soon the trumpets sound again, announcing a feast at the Cornucopia that will contain something each of the tributes needs desperately. Katniss is sure that Peeta's medicine will be there, but Peeta forbids her to go, saying that he'll follow her and shout the entire way, which will get him killed anyway. She finally convinces him to eat something, telling him that she won't go, but she knows that he won't make it unless she does.

Katniss is aware that Peeta is in many ways a burden to her—he's too weak to travel or hunt, and she must stay with him to protect him. At the same time, she puts his needs first. She makes sure that he eats and rests before she does.



Even though Peeta's too weak to do very much for Katniss, he still tries to protect her, worrying when she's out of sight. He also insists that she rests as well. Appearance again ties in with love and loyalty, since both Katniss and Peeta put on a brave face in order to assuage the other's fears.



All of Katniss's happy stories link back to the people she left behind in District 12, showing how much her memories of them must motivate her in the Games. Her story about Prim's goat also highlights some of the effects of social inequality. The fact that they could only afford the goat because it was very sick shows how little money they had to spare, even for special occasions like birthdays. And yet, they saved the goat through care and tenderness, suggesting that perhaps the same thing can save them in this situation.



Peeta and Katniss both demonstrate their willingness to sacrifice for the other—even though sacrifice is opposed to the nature of the Hunger Games. In their loyalty to each other, they're again defying the Gamemakers, dismantling the cutthroat mechanics of the Games.



As Katniss heads outside, lost in thought, another parachute arrives from Haymitch. Katniss realizes that it contains sleep syrup, and she mashes it into a berry mush for Peeta. She goes into the cave and tells him that she's found special berries for him to try, and he eats several spoonfuls before he realizes it contains sleep syrup. He attempts to vomit, but it doesn't work, and he's soon unconscious. Katniss watches him with a mixture of sadness and satisfaction.

Although Katniss was angry about acting and pretending during her training sessions, she is now the one pretending in order to trick Peeta into taking the sleep syrup. However, she tricks him in order to save his life, so behind her seeming hypocrisy, she's still doing what she can to protect someone she cares about.



CHAPTER 21

Katniss camouflages the cave opening before nightfall. Then she eats and cleans her weapons. Katniss decides to take her bow and arrows as well as the knife, since Peeta isn't in any condition to use a knife anyway. If Katniss doesn't return, Peeta won't live either. The remaining contestants now are Cato and Clove from District 2, Thresh from District 11, and Foxface from District 5. Katniss curls up next to Peeta to wait for dawn. The nights are growing colder in the arena, and Katniss imagines that people in District 12 are watching them anxiously at home. Katniss also imagines Gale watching the Games and wonders what he thinks of her and Peeta's relationship.

Katniss chooses to endanger herself in order to save Peeta—she knows that there's no other way he'll survive. Katniss contemplates what their situation must look like to viewers who are watching back home. Gale, who can't possibly know about all the politics involved, for example, might have a different interpretation of Katniss and Peeta's relationship. This is also an indication of Katniss's confusion regarding love, as she feels a connection to both Peeta and Gale.



At around three hours before dawn, Katniss prepares to leave Peeta, placing the medicine and water near his side. She decides to take his jacket as well as her own, since he has the warmth of the sleeping bag and his fever. Remembering the cameras, Katniss gives Peeta a kiss before she heads off for the Cornucopia.

Katniss is still acting for the cameras—making sure that her appearance matches that of someone who's in love. However, even though her kiss is calculated and she doesn't care for Peeta in the exact way that the audience believes she does, she still cares deeply for him and ensures that he has everything he'll need when he wakes up.



Katniss still isn't able to hear out of her left ear, but she follows the same path she took earlier to her hiding spot near the lake. When she arrives, she still has an hour or two left to wait before the feast begins at dawn. She settles in the underbrush to wait. As the first rays of light hit the Cornucopia, a table rises out of a disturbance on the ground, with packs that are marked with each of the remaining districts' numbers. Foxface leaps out of the mouth of the Cornucopia, where she had been hiding, grabs her pack, and runs off before anyone else can reach the table. Katniss realizes that she needs to get her own pack next, or else someone else will scoop it up when they grab theirs.

Each time the Gamemakers force the tributes to converge, they're actually emphasizing the division between the districts, since the tributes will be forced to fight and kill each other when they meet. Even the fact that Foxface was clever enough to hide in the horn, for example, raises feelings of jealousy and anger in Katniss, who is continually surprised by how clever Foxface is when she seems so unassuming.



Katniss runs towards the Cornucopia and deflects a knife that comes whizzing at her. Katniss retaliates, shooting an arrow at Clove, but the arrow only hits her arm. Katniss reaches the backpack, but a second knife slices her forehead, and then Clove pins her to the ground. Clove doesn't want to kill Katniss immediately though. She mentions Rue, taunting Katniss about her ally's death. But just as Clove begins to cut Katniss's lip, she's lifted into the air by Thresh. Thresh kills Clove and demands to know what happened to Rue. Katniss tells him that they teamed up and that she tried to save Rue, but it was too late. Katniss adds that District 11 sent her bread in thanks. She asks Thresh to kill her quickly, and he hesitates before letting her go. He says that they're now even, and Katniss runs. Thresh grabs both his pack and Cato's and jumps down a cliff behind the Cornucopia and disappears.

Cato discovers that Clove is dead, and Katniss flees the scene before he can chase after her. She hopes that Cato will run after Thresh, since Thresh is the one who has his pack. Katniss makes it back to the cave with difficulty and administers the medicine to Peeta before she succumbs to blood loss from the gash on her forehead and loses consciousness. The last thing she remembers is an exquisite green and silver moth landing on the curve of her wrist.

CHAPTER 22

Katniss begins to wake, imagining that she's back at home and her mother is stroking her hair. However, she jerks awake when she hears Peeta's voice saying her name instead. He's recovered quickly since Katniss administered the medicine, and now he's taking care of Katniss as she recovers from her wound.

Peeta feeds Katniss, as she tells him about what happened at the feast. She tells him about how Thresh spared her life, and Peeta takes in this news with disbelief. Katniss dismissively says that she wouldn't expect Peeta to understand how difficult it is to owe someone something—she brings up the **bread** that Peeta tossed her years ago as an example. Katniss asks Peeta why he did that for her, and Peeta tells her that she knows why, but he doesn't say any more than that.

Thresh chooses to show Katniss mercy in order to thank her for her treatment of Rue—and in this basic act of kindness, he temporarily breaks down the divisions that the Capitol has enforced between districts. Further, it is Katniss's original kindness that inspires such behavior in Thresh. There is a strength in friendship and loyalty that breaks down the Capitol's control, and are therefore dangerous to the very structure of government in Panem.



Katniss suffers from some major blood loss, but she manages to stay conscious long enough to administer medicine to Peeta. Her loyalty to others is what motivates her to push herself beyond her limits.



Katniss finds herself missing the comfort of having loved ones to care for her at home. Peeta, however, is doing the best that he can, and he's eager to care for her now that he's starting to recover.



Katniss and Peeta's biggest arguments revolve around the fact that they come from different social classes. Katniss resents Peeta for having had a cushier upbringing, and Peeta gets upset that she dismisses his ability to understand her experiences. The problem of owing someone is a particularly touchy subject for Katniss, since she still feels that she owes Peeta for his act of kindness on the day he tossed her the bread. Peeta cared enough about Katniss that it was also an act that benefited him, but Katniss has trouble believing this.



Peeta and Katniss discuss the remaining contestants, and the thought of Thresh being killed upsets Katniss greatly. She goes to sleep as Peeta keeps watch, and he wakes her in the evening to split the remaining food for dinner. He tells her about Thresh's hideout across the lake, a field with long grasses. Peeta says that the field seems ominous, so he has stayed away, and this prompts Katniss to start mentally comparing Peeta and Gale again, as she knows that Gale would view the field as a danger as well as a source of food.

Peeta wonders what it will take to get Haymitch to send them some bread, and Katniss remembers the previous time Haymitch sent broth—when Katniss first gave Peeta a kiss. She knows that Haymitch is urging her to up the romance factor. Katniss steers the direction in a vaguely romantic direction, hinting that she doesn't know what she would do if she were to lose Peeta, and they kiss again, but Haymitch doesn't send any food.

Katniss insists on taking the first watch, but after three to four hours, she can't stay awake any longer and wakes Peeta. The storm the next day prevents them from hunting again, and Katniss takes the opportunity to ask Peeta about when he first started liking her. Peeta recounts a detailed story about the first day of school, how his father had pointed Katniss out because he had been in love with Katniss's mother, but she ran off with a coal miner because the coal miner had a beautiful singing voice. Katniss sang on the first day of school too, and Peeta fell for her then and there. Katniss realizes that Peeta might not be pretending to love her, and the thought confuses her, but she knows she has to play along—she leans in for a kiss, and as soon as their lips touch, another gift from the sponsors arrives, this one bearing a feast.

CHAPTER 23

Katniss and Peeta are careful to ration the rich food so that it doesn't disturb their stomachs. They talk about how Haymitch will become their neighbor if they win the games and move to Victor's Village—the part of the district where previous Hunger Games winners live. It occurs to Katniss that they don't know how Haymitch won his Games, and Peeta and Katniss conclude that he must have outsmarted his competitors. Katniss begins to serve herself a second portion of the food when the anthem begins to play. Peeta checks the images in the sky and tells her gently that Thresh is now dead. Katniss is upset by the news, but she waits until her face is covered inside the sleeping bag to mourn. She vows to remember Thresh and Rue. Katniss drifts off to sleep, and Peeta wakes her in a few hours to eat again.

Katniss also looks down on Peeta at times because he doesn't possess the same street smarts that she and Gale have, due to his merchant background. Katniss also finds herself caring about Thresh's fate, since he showed some compassion for her situation earlier.



Katniss understands what Peeta doesn't—that their affectionate kisses and embraces are a show for the sponsors. She knows that the amount of food they receive from Haymitch is a direct result of how convincingly love-struck they can appear.



Appearances in the Games are complicated because it's not always clear which emotions and acts are genuine. Peeta's story, in particular, sounds like the truth, but Katniss is unnerved because she's been thinking of their relationship as an act (and the truth of his story may affect Katniss's own emotions, making what she has been playacting more real). The story of Katniss's mother and father also demonstrates how love can break down divisions between different socioeconomic classes, and also that it inspires loyalty in others, as Peeta's father never stopped caring about Katniss's mother or, by extension, Katniss.



The fact that the victors—who become very wealthy after winning the Games—are sectioned off into a small village in the district emphasizes class divisions. Although Katniss is extremely saddened by the news of Thresh's death, she knows that she can't show her distress to the audience, since mourning another tribute directly counters the object of the Games—to kill everyone else. She has to pretend that there's still some sense of division between her and all of the other districts' tributes.



As Peeta takes his turn sleeping, Katniss keeps watch. During her shift, the rain stops suddenly, and a full moon appears in the sky, reminding Katniss of how long it's been since she was last in District 12. She imagines what life might be like if she won and didn't have to hunt for food anymore, and she finds the thought somewhat alarming. She also wonders what things will be like with Peeta if they win, but she can't imagine being anything more than good friends.

Katniss wakes Peeta in the morning and they split the remaining stew. They joke about what Effie would say about their manners, but when they leave the cave to begin their day, they become serious. After a while, it becomes evident that they have to split up because Peeta's loud footsteps are scaring away the game. Peeta heads off to forage nearby while Katniss hunts.

Katniss grows worried when Peeta doesn't respond to her whistled signal, however, and runs to find him, seeing a stash of gathered roots and berries on the ground. She yells for Peeta, who appears, worried. Angrily, Katniss observes the food stash, noticing that some of the cheese is missing. She also recognizes that the berries are poisonous ones, and then suddenly, a cannon goes off and a hovercraft nearby lifts Foxface's body away. Assuming that she was killed by Cato, Peeta grabs Katniss and begins to run—but Katniss informs Peeta that Foxface was his kill, not Cato's, thanks to the berries.

CHAPTER 24

Katniss explains how Foxface had been stealing food from the others and how she must have thought the berries were safe because Peeta had collected them in his stash. Katniss collects the remaining poison berries in a pouch to carry with her, in case they have the opportunity to trick Cato as well. Katniss makes a fire to cook the meat she just hunted and also to draw Cato, their only remaining competitor, but he doesn't show. Peeta asks to stay in the cave again that night, and Katniss reluctantly relents, realizing that she hasn't been very nice to Peeta all day.

After Katniss and Peeta reach the cave and eat, Katniss allows Peeta to sleep throughout the night as she keeps watch, thinking about how dangerous Cato is. In the morning, Peeta takes the watch, and Katniss sleeps until the afternoon. When she wakes, they decide to eat most of their food so that they're not hungry when they have to fight Cato. It turns out that the streams and ponds in the area have also run dry, meaning that the Gamekeepers are forcing the remaining competitors to gather by the lake.

Since her family has always needed more food, Katniss's existence has revolved around the acquisition of more food, and she has trouble imagining an identity outside of that. She can't comprehend what it would be like to be wealthy and idle. Also, she's confused by what winning would mean for her relationship with Peeta because she knows that she does genuinely care for him now, but not in the way that it appears on camera.



Again, the fact that Peeta has never had to hunt becomes obvious when he can't tread as lightly as Katniss. It's another point of annoyance for her.



Foxface was clever at reading appearances—it was only because Peeta had genuinely believed that the berries were safe that she was tricked into eating them. His genuine error caused her to outsmart herself. The berries will also come to play an important role later in the book.



Although Katniss does care about Peeta, some of her choices—such as consenting to staying in the cave at night—are a result of considering how she might appear to the audience. She realizes that she has to listen to Peeta sometimes because the Capitol audience will expect her to.



Although at times they drag each other down, there are benefits to being part of a team. Katniss and Peeta are both able to get sleep, whereas a lone competitor would likely have to stay up to take the entire watch. Being a team, in this case, makes Katniss and Peeta stronger than they would be if they were divided. This same principle is the reason the Capitol keeps districts divided—to make sure they don't gather strength from teaming up.



Katniss and Peeta head to the lake, but Cato doesn't seem to be there when they arrive. They wait in the open. As they wait, Katniss sings Rue's four-note melody to the **mockingjays**, and they pick it up. Suddenly, however, the mockingjays' songs turn into shrieking, and Peeta and Katniss see Cato barreling out of the woods. Some sort of body armor protects him, so Katniss's arrows do nothing to hurt him. However, instead of attacking Peeta and Katniss, Cato runs past them. Katniss looks to the woods and sees a number of creatures leaping onto the plain. She turns to run, thinking only of saving herself.

At the beginning of the novel, the mockingjay pin reminded Katniss of her father and of the Capitol's blunder with muttations—now mockingjays remind her of Rue, a friend she made in the unlikeliest of places. Katniss's reaction to the wolf creatures also shows how the Games can divide individuals—in her terror, she temporarily forgets about everything other than her own safety, despite all the time and effort she's spent trying to save Peeta.



CHAPTER 25

Katniss can see that the creatures are more muttations, giant wolves that move in an unnervingly human way. She follows Cato to the Cornucopia, but as she's about the climb, she remembers Peeta and turns to see him struggling on his bad leg. He tells her to go on, but she tries to help him up the golden horn of the Cornucopia, fending off the mutts with her remaining arrows.

The mutts are another tactic the Gamemakers use to try to divide the tributes. After her initial blind terror passes, however, Katniss refuses to leave Peeta, demonstrating how strong her loyalty to him is.



As Katniss and Peeta climb onto the golden horn, Katniss recognizes that the mutts each resemble one of the fallen tributes, and the thought terrifies her. She tries to think of how she can get to Cato to attack him, when she turns to see that Cato has Peeta in a headlock. Cato says that if Katniss shoots him in the head, he'll take Peeta down with him. Peeta is quickly losing air, and Katniss is unsure what to do. Peeta raises his forearm to draw an X across Cato's hand, and Katniss understands. She shoots Cato's hand just as Peeta shoves him backwards. Katniss grabs Peeta before he can fall and they wait for Cato to die. Because he's wearing protective body armor, however, the attack continues throughout the night, and Cato still isn't dead.

Even after the other tributes have died, the Gamemakers use them to divide the competitors. Katniss is forced to shoot the creatures that resemble the allies and enemies she knew in life, viewing them anew as threats. Meanwhile, the Capitol's transformation of the other tributes into mutations again displays the Capitol's power and control, in this case even over death as it can bring back dead contestants to a monstrous sort of life. Katniss and Peeta defeat Cato as a team.



In the morning, when Katniss sees Cato again, the muttations have left, but Cato is still alive. He's a raw hunk of meat, and she sends an arrow to kill him more out of a sense of pity than competition. Still, after Cato dies, nothing changes in the arena. Katniss and Peeta move to the lake so that the hovercraft can retrieve Cato's body, but even after that, nothing happens. Then an announcement comes on—the last revision to the rules has been revoked, and there can only be one winner to the Hunger Games.

The Gamemakers choose this moment to revoke their rule to emphasize how much the Hunger Games are really about being divided—every individual for himself. There's no room for teams or alliances in the arena, just like there's no room for alliances between districts. The Gamemakers clearly believe that the urge to survive is greater than any love, and they now want to thrill their bloodthirsty audience by pitting two people in love against each other.



Katniss is shocked, and when she sees Peeta reaching for his knife, she automatically trains her last arrow on him. Peeta drops his knife in the lake and tells her to go ahead, but Katniss is ashamed by her reaction and drops her weapons too. Peeta insists and says that there's no other way—the Capitol needs to have a victor. His words give Katniss an idea. She retrieves her pouch of poisoned berries, and she hands some to Peeta and takes some herself. On the count of three, they agree to eat the berries and kill themselves. On three, as the berries cross their lips, another frantic announcement comes on, telling them to stop. Katniss and Peeta are announced as the winners of the Hunger Games.

Katniss almost does exactly what the Gamemakers want her to do—she sees Peeta, for a moment, as the enemy and prepares to kill him, making her as much of a hypocrite as the Career tributes who turn on each other when the tension becomes too much. However, Peeta's love, which makes him willing to die to save Katniss, snaps her out of it, and she again sees a way to turn an apparently weak position into a position of strength: she attacks not Peeta, but the rules and logic of the game—she and Peeta show that they are showing them that they'd rather sacrifice their lives together than give the Gamemakers their one winner, that the rules of the Games are less important than the bonds of love and loyalty.



CHAPTER 26

Katniss and Peeta spit out the berries and wash out their mouths in the lake. A hovercraft arrives, and Peeta is immediately taken to a separate room to be treated for his wounds. Katniss becomes panicked when he's wheeled away, and somebody arrives to sedate her. When she comes to, she's strapped into a hospitable bed, and there's a meager meal before her. She realizes that her appetite has shrunk dramatically since the end of the Games. Katniss tries to leave, but then something enters her veins from an IV, and she's knocked out again. This process repeats itself several more times before she wakes one day and is no longer strapped in.

Katniss and Peeta are immediately separated when they get back to the Capitol so that they're easier to manage and can be treated separately. The division makes Katniss feel powerless, since she's spent so much of her time in the arena making sure to protect Peeta, and now he's taken away from her with ease.



Katniss notices that her scars are all gone, and her hearing's been repaired. She gets out of bed to meet her team, calling for Peeta when she enters the hall. Effie's voice responds instead, and Katniss runs to greet the team, surprisingly hugging Haymitch first. Katniss begins to panic when she notices that Peeta isn't there, but Haymitch assures her that it's only because the Capitol wants to televise their reunion.

Another unlikely relationship that's come out of the Hunger Games is the one between Katniss and Haymitch. Katniss understands Haymitch better and has more compassion for his bad habits after going through some of the same horrors he must have survived in his Hunger Games.



Katniss follows Cinna to get ready. He's designed a very simple looking yellow dress that makes Katniss appear young and innocent. Katniss is aware that this must be designed with a particular reason in mind, but she can't understand why yet.

After the Games, Katniss knows that appearances are calculated—especially important ones like the televised reunion. Cinna didn't just pick the dress because he thought it was pretty.



When Haymitch greets Katniss again, he asks to give her a hug before the show begins. While he has her in an embrace, Haymitch whispers that the Capitol is very angry that she made them the laughingstock of Panem by using the berries to outwit them and force them to change the rules of the game. She's in very grave danger unless she can convince them that she was so madly in love she couldn't act otherwise. Haymitch also adds that he didn't have to give Peeta the same memo—he's already in love with her.

Katniss realizes that camouflage is her last defense, as it was for Peeta during the Games. Her appearance has to match the audience's idea of what it should be, or else she might face the consequences of an angry Capitol.



Katniss is very afraid, wondering how this might affect her family in District 12. She has many unanswered questions about the implications of their victory—but she has to set them aside for now, as she prepares to step into the most dangerous part of the Hunger Games yet.

Katniss's fears again return to her family and the people she cares most about—except this time, it's more plausible that they'll get hurt, since she's out of the arena. Ironically, her family was safer when she was in the Hunger Games, since her life was the one at stake.



CHAPTER 27

Katniss waits as other members of the team are introduced onstage, and then it's her turn, and she sees that Peeta is already there, standing a few feet from her. She runs to him, giving him a hug, and he kisses her until Haymitch makes them stop. They sit together on a loveseat, and Katniss cuddles up next to Peeta as they watch the highlight reel of the Hunger Games. It documents all the tributes' deaths, as well as the scenes between Peeta and Katniss that seem to tell a love story. Katniss is grateful for the video's edits, which have been designed to make her appear madly in love.

The video edits emphasize how the Hunger Games are just entertainment for the Capitol audience. They create a love story out of the clips because that's what the audience wants. Many of the emotions depicted on camera were genuine, but the compilation of them paints a picture that's not entirely true to Katniss.



President Snow, leader of Panem, arrives with a crown, breaking it in half to crown both Katniss and Peeta. By the coldness in his eyes, Katniss sees that President Snow blames her for being the instigator of the berry stunt. After the crowning, Peeta and Katniss attend a Victory Banquet, smiling and laughing for the cameras while holding hands. Afterwards, Haymitch sends Peeta off without letting Katniss talk to him. Haymitch tells Katniss to go to bed, since their interview is the next day at two.

President Snow's gesture of breaking the crown in two emphasizes division. He knows that the fact that Peeta and Katniss outsmarted the Gamemakers as a team is dangerous to the control he has over the districts—what he wants most is to keep the districts divided.



Katniss attempts to find Peeta anyway, wandering to the roof. She returns to her room, but when she tries to leave again—this time to head directly to Peeta's room—she finds that the door has been locked from the outside. She has the eerie feeling that she's being monitored.

Katniss realizes that the show isn't over, even when she's not on television. She's being watched, and she's kept away from Peeta.



The next morning, Katniss joins her prep team and Cinna as they dress her for her interview. When it's time to talk to Caesar, Katniss makes sure to allow Peeta to do most of the talking—however, she interjects when she hears about Peeta's new leg. She hadn't realized that his leg had had to be replaced because of the tourniquet she placed on it, even though the tourniquet did save his life. Caesar eventually directs some questions at Katniss. In particular, he asks what was going through Katniss's mind when she decided to eat the poison berries. Katniss thinks for a bit, knowing that her answer is crucial, and she responds that she couldn't bear the thought of being without Peeta. Peeta agrees, and the interview concludes.

Katniss's answer to the question of what was going through her mind is important because what she did in coming up with the plan to commit double suicide could be perceived by the Capitol as a direct attack against it and its rules. She hides the defiance of the gesture—in order to protect herself and those she loves—by saying that it was purely an act of love. She plays into the narrative, and in doing so minimizes any defiant action. That Peeta actually is entirely in love with her, however, means that she is not just deceiving the viewers. And, further, she does feel strongly about Peeta—perhaps not romantic love, but some sort of love and obligation, so even her subterfuge isn't entirely a lie.



Katniss and Peeta gather their things—just the **mockingjay** pin for Katniss—and they head to the train. They'll have to travel again soon to go on a tour of the districts, but for now, they're just heading back to District 12. As they move farther away from the Capitol, Katniss begins to think of home. She feels that she's reverting to who she was in District 12, and suddenly, she feels uncomfortable with Peeta.

When the train stops for fuel, Peeta and Katniss head outside, hand in hand. Peeta hands her a bunch of wildflowers, but they only remind Katniss of Gale. Peeta asks her what's bothering her, but she replies that it's nothing. At that moment, Haymitch appears and tells them they've been doing a great job and to keep it up. Peeta asks Katniss what Haymitch means and is extremely upset to discover that Katniss's feelings for him have all been an act, part of a survival strategy. Peeta begins to distance himself from Katniss. Katniss feels sad about the distance between them, but she's too confused to say anything. As they pull up to the station in District 12, Peeta extends his hand, adding that it's for the cameras, and Katniss holds on tightly, dreading the moment she'll have to let go.

Because Katniss was constantly aware of keeping up appearances throughout the Games, she has a hard time figuring out how she should feel now that she might be allowed to revert back to normal.



Although Katniss was the one who didn't want to pretend at the start of the Games, Peeta is now the one who's hurt that Katniss has been strategizing with Haymitch all along. Katniss, in the end, is the one who's been most effective at pretending. However, her sadness reveals that she does sincerely care for Peeta, but she doesn't yet know what role that can play in their relationship outside of the Hunger Games arena, or the degree to which the false "reality" of the Games can or should or must bleed into the "reality" of the life she is returning to in District 12.





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