

"CATCHING FIRE: THIS IS NOT A SCREENPLAY"

ACT 1

by

Hana McCarthy

[Chanamcc@gmail.com](mailto:Chanamcc@gmail.com)

Twitter @hanamccarthy

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This is not a script. It is a sample first act written solely as an educational exercise in film-to-book adaptation, by and for students of literature and film.

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OPENING CREDITS

EXT. DISTRICT 12/VICTORS VILLAGE - MOONLIT NIGHT:

A featureless cull de sac with 7-8 McMansions, most boarded up with dried out lawns. Three are occupied, two with sparse, newly seeded lawns. A large cat crouches in shrubs. Suddenly automatic lawn sprinklers come on; a questing mouse darts; the cat flashes claws, teeth; saunters off with dangling mouse; delicately leaps to the sill of open window and into one of the houses.

INT. PRESIDENT SNOW'S PRIVATE VIEWING ROOM - EARLY MORNING:

An elegant table is being set for breakfast by two silent servants. On the wall is a large, three-paneled HDTV; the right panel is showing a morning talk show, on mute. PRESIDENT SNOW enters, waving out the servants and aides, delicately helps himself to tea, tiny savories. He waves his palm over a sensor and two new panels light up, the left-most with constantly changing small live feeds from district monitors; the central panel flashes the superimposed message: RESUME ARCHIVE REVIEW? Snow presses a button. Superimposed: ARCHIVE 74<sup>TH</sup> HUNGER GAMES: FLAGGED IMAGES. One picture of KATNISS EVERDEEN after another slowly scrolls.

WEATHER ANNOUNCER (VO)

...A high pressure system over most of the continent promises splendid weather, just in time for the Victory Tour. MARCUS has more.

MARCUS (VO)

You bet! We're going live now to CAESAR FLICKERMAN with a very special guest - our new head GAMEMASTER, PLUTARCH HEAVENSBEES.

Off camera, morning show studio audience reacts, applauds. On the right hand screen with superimposed CAPITOL ONE TV logo Caesar Flickerman and Plutarch Heavensbee appear, ensconced at a studio desk.

CAESAR

A warm Capitol welcome, Plutarch! Nice to have you here.

On the Capitol One set Plutarch, buffed to Beauty Base One, gives Caesars' hand a little squeeze, blows kisses to audience.

PLUTARCH

Pleasure, pleasure, so glad to be here.

CAESAR

You must feel honored to be called to

serve at such an historic moment.

PLUTARCH

A privilege indeed. This QUARTER QUELL is only the third in our young Nation's history and, as you can imagine, the Gamemakers have been working like slaves to make next year's Arena one we'll long remember.

CAESAR

How about a little preview?

PLUTARCH

Oooh! No spoilers allowed!

CAESAR

But we don't have to wait a year for excitement - our star-crossed lovers are about to cross the country for a Victory Tour that's also...

(OC musical cue elicits audience gasp)

CAESAR

An engagement celebration, starting right here in our beloved Capitol.

PLUTARCH

With their stylist's simply ravishing line of wedding gowns - and for dear PEETA, frock coats, retro wing collars, embroidered waistcoats to die for.

Superimposed flashing message: CODE SIX ALERT: DISTRICT 8 overrides footage from center and right screens. Left panel multi-feeds now highlight District 8 images. Snow still watching screens, calmly selecting savories, sipping tea now and then. A link device allows instant audio and visual access to CENTCOM and field commanders.

CENTCOM OC VOICE 1

Hovercraft, Peacekeepers in position. We are GO to launch. D8 target coordinates 244.621.400. Security do we have confirm?

Snow casually presses a button.

CENTCOM OC VOICE 2

We have coded confirm. Do you copy? We have confirm.

CENTER SCREEN EXT. DISTRICT 8/CENTRAL TRANSPORTATION HUB - MORNING RUSH HOUR:

Hovercraft overhead. Peacekeepers fan out and open fire on random commuters; some fall, covered in blood, others run in panic.

CENTER SCREEN EXT. DISTRICT 8/FACTORY - MORNING RUSH HOUR:

A light flash; a building erupts in flame. Desperate screams as those nearby try to flee and those inside catch fire, try to break windows, doors to escape.

OS DISTRICT 8 VOICES  
(screaming)

EXT. DISTRICT 12/VICTORS VILLAGE - EARLIER, NIGHT:

KATNISS OS VOICE  
(screaming)

INT. VICTORS VILLAGE/EVERDEENS' HOUSE/PRIM'S ROOM - NIGHT:

PRIM EVERDEEN hears screams, wakes, quickly flicks on a light, swings her feet out of bed, grabs the large sleeping cat and heads to the hall leading to Katniss' room.

KATNISS OS VOICE  
(screaming)

MRS. EVERDEEN catches Prim's eye, nods. Prim heads to Katniss' room; Mrs. Everdeen downstairs.

INT. VICTORS VILLAGE/HAYMITCH'S KITCHEN - NIGHT:

HAYMITCH ABERNATHY, passed out on his kitchen table, clutching a knife in one hand and a crystal glass in the other, hears screams, wakes for a moment, knife raised, goes back to sleep.

INT. VICTORS VILLAGE/PEETA MELLARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT:

PEETA MELLARK hears screams, wakes, quickly swings out of bed and goes to his window overlooking the Everdeen house. He sees the light go on in Katniss' bedroom and goes back to his bed, but still listening, awake, worrying.

INT. VICTORS VILLAGE/KATNISS' BEDROOM - NIGHT:

(POV Prim) Prim enters holding cat. Katniss is sitting bolt

upright, blank eyes filled with terror; Katniss seems to look straight at Prim. (POV Katniss) TRIBUTE RUE pulling a spear out of her gut.

KATNISS

Rue! No, No, Rue!

PRIM

Katniss, it's me, Prim. It's okay.

Prim drops the cat, goes to her sister and holds her, making comforting sounds while the cat prowls on Katniss' bed, occasionally sitting to stare. Katniss is drenched in sweat, gasping, shaking, still trying to grab hold of reality.

KATNISS

Sorry. I'm so sorry!

PRIM

No, don't worry.

KATNISS

I'm so cold.

Prim wraps a shawl around Katniss. The cat jumps on the window sill and meows, pacing, tail flailing.

PRIM

I don't think he likes it here much.

KATNISS

Me neither. I feel like I'm back in the Capitol, like they're still watching me.

Mrs. Everdeen enters, carrying a mug of warm tea in one hand and Katniss' hunting clothes in the other. Prim takes the cup, wraps Katniss' hands around it. Mrs. Everdeen drops the clothes on the bed.

KATNISS

(to Mrs. Everdeen)

Yes.

MRS. EVERDEEN

I'll braid your hair when you get back.

KATNISS

Thank you.

Katniss reaches for her hunting pants, addresses cat.

KATNISS

Okay cat, let's go hunting.

EXT. DISTRICT 12 /WOODS BEYOND THE FENCE - DAWN:

Katniss - in her element - moves through the woods with

silent grace. The full moon is setting, dawn just beginning to streak the sky. Katniss moves slowly, carefully to a blind on her favorite mountain-ridge meadow. She waits, totally still, bow charged. A large flock of wild turkeys led by a big tom moves cautiously into the meadow; closer, closer, making reassuring purring and clucking noises. Katniss takes aim; the first hen is down; the flock scatters; second hen down; alarm calls and with an enormous explosion of sound the flock takes wing. Third hen down. Katniss takes aim for a fourth, knows she can't make the shot, shrugs, smiles and gathers her birds.

EXT. DISTRICT 12/PERIMETER FENCE - MORNING:

Katniss tosses her game bag and the turkeys through the fence and then ducks through herself. Sees GALE HAWTHORNE walking along the perimeter fence. Gale is wearing miners' overalls and is carrying a helmet.

GALE

Hey, Catnip. Seriously good haul.

KATNISS

What are you doing here? You're late for work.

GALE

Nah. They moved me to second shift.

KATNISS

Why? Where?

GALE

Get any squirrels?

KATNISS

Yeah, four fat ones on your snare line.

GALE

The turkeys finally came for the corn?

KATNISS

Twenty! The big tom came so close I could have bagged him with my hands.

GALE

Taking them to my Mom?

KATNISS

'Course. She's had the smoker stoked for weeks...What shaft?

GALE

Nine.

KATNISS  
Why? What are they doing?

GALE  
It's okay. No big deal.

KATNISS  
Don't give me that.

GALE  
(reluctantly)  
Some room and pillar retreat extractions  
on an old longseam.

KATNISS  
No. Where? Tell me.

GALE  
The twelve hundred foot seam.

KATNISS  
Gale.

Her eyes are wide with fear. Gale takes her face in his hands, kisses her urgently, pulls back, runs his fingers across her cheek.

GALE  
I had to do that, just once.

Off screen, MINE WHISTLE BLOWS.

INT. PRESIDENT SNOW'S PRIVATE VIEWING ROOM - DAY:

On screen Gale kisses Katniss; superimposed: DISTRICT 12 PERIMETER CAM 26 LIVE FEED. President Snow watches.

INT. VICTORS VILLAGE/HAYMITCH'S KITCHEN - NOON:

Peeta enters Haymitch's kitchen, carrying bread, looks at Haymitch who is still passed out on the table holding the knife and glass. Peeta quietly makes coffee, slices bread, toasts it. Gently takes the knife, replaces it with a mug of coffee and toast.

PEETA  
Lunch.

HAYMITCH  
Still working on breakfast.

PEETA  
EFFIE will be here in two hours.

HAYMITCH  
(moans)

PEETA  
Did you see it? Plutarch was on the morning show. Did you know?

HAYMITCH  
That's why I'm celebrating.

PEETA  
You could have warned us.

Katniss breezes in, cheered by her morning hunt. Tosses a packet at Peeta, who catches it one-handed.

KATNISS  
Smoked duck from HAZELLE.

Katniss senses the tension, looks from Peeta to Haymitch.

KATNISS  
What? What is it?

PEETA  
She doesn't know.

KATNISS  
Know what?

HAYMITCH  
The Victory Tour will have a wedding theme. CINNA'S got a boxcar full of wedding dresses for you, one for each District. You'll be stunning, Sweetheart, a knockout.

KATNISS  
They're planning our wedding? We're supposed to get married for a television show?

Haymitch goes to the sink and runs the water at full blast, masking the conversation.

PEETA  
They wanted to watch us die on live TV...

A sharp look from Haymitch silences Peeta in mid sentence.

PEETA  
(to Katniss)  
I'm sorry.

KATNISS  
What are you sorry for? It's what you want, isn't it?

PEETA

No, Katniss. It's not. I wanted us to be real, not some phony show for the Capitol.

Peeta, stung to anger, leaves, slamming the screen door.

HAYMITCH

You could live a thousand lifetimes and not deserve that boy.

INT. THE VICTORY TOUR TRAIN/TRAVELING - AFTERNOON

EFFIE TRINKET is glowing, triumphant, officious, passing out schedules to Katniss, Peeta and Haymitch.

EFFIE

4PM sharp: President's Rose Garden for the first photo shoot.

KATNISS

(mumbles)  
I hate roses.

EFFIE

9PM: Soiree at the Capitol Galleria for the opening exhibit of Peeta's extraordinary paintings. And I will be doing the color commentary for Capitol One TV. You may not know it but I am considered something of an expert on Contemporary Art.

HAYMITCH, KATNISS, PEETA

(stunned silence)

PEETA

That's great, Effie!

OCTAVIA, VENIA and FLAVIUS (the PREP TEAM), swirl in, with hugs, air kisses. They lay claim to Katniss.

KATNISS

Doesn't Peeta have to get prepped?

EFFIE

He doesn't need as much work as you.

PREP TEAM bundles Katniss off in a flurry, fussing over the state of her nails, leg and arm hair, eyebrows.

INT. THE VICTORY TRAIN OBSERVATION DECK - SUNSET:

Peeta is sketching a bouquet of flowers. Katniss comes in,

sits. Shows off her arms.

KATNISS

No hair.

PEETA

Must hurt like hell.

KATNISS

Yeah.

Awkward silence.

KATNISS AND PEETA

(simultaneously)

Sorry!

PEETA

Seems like we're always saying that. Look, let's start from scratch. Isn't it strange that I know you'd risk your life for me, but I don't know what your favorite color is?

KATNISS

Green. What's yours?

PEETA

Orange.

KATNISS

Like Venia's hair?

PEETA

A bit more muted, like sunset.

KATNISS

I've never seen your paintings.

PEETA

You will. Rooms full of them. You'll hate them.

KATNISS

Why?

PEETA

I paint the Arena.

KATNISS

What? Why?

PEETA

When I paint, I don't dream so much

KATNISS

Every night...It's like every night I'm back there.

PEETA

I know. Sometimes I hear you.

KATNISS

I'm sorry.

PEETA

No, forget it...What's your cat's name?

KATNISS

Not mine, Prim's. BUTTERCUP.

PEETA

(incredulous)

Buttercup?

Both laugh.

EXT. THE CAPITOL/PRESIDENTIAL ROSE GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON:

Katniss is wearing a wedding gown of hundreds of delicately shaded cream silk petals, her head crowned with roses. With Cinna and the prep team, she walks down a long marble-columned portico and out into a vast and magnificent rose garden.

CINNA

Let's try it with a smile!

Suddenly, President Snow appears with a military escort. Katniss and Cinna look shocked - this is definitely not on the schedule. Several of the guards urge Cinna and the prep team down the path away from Katniss. Snow takes Katniss' arm and escorts her into the heart of the garden. At every turn, silent armed guards stand at attention.

SNOW

Shall we take a stroll?

KATNISS

Uh...

SNOW

President Snow stops near one rose bed and begins carefully cutting roses.

SNOW

Miss Everdeen, you have a problem; one that began the moment you pulled out those poisonous berries in the Arena. Our late Gamemaster SENECA CRANE should have blown you to dust right then, but he had a foolish, sentimental streak.

Unfortunately, some people viewed your

trick with the berries as an act of rebellion. And if a girl from District 12 of all places can challenge the Capitol and walk away unharmed, what is to stop others from doing the same? What is to prevent, say, an uprising?

KATNISS

I didn't, I don't. I mean, I don't mean to start any uprisings.

SNOW

I believe you. And now it is up to you and dear Peeta to convince the Districts that you acted purely from undying devotion, not defiance; that you are both completely loyal and ever grateful servants of the Capitol.

By the way, how is your handsome cousin? Gale...is it not? Speak, Miss Everdeen! Him I can easily kill off if we don't come to a happy resolution.

KATNISS

Please don't hurt Gale. He's just my friend. He's been my friend for years.

SNOW

It would save time if we agreed not to lie to one another. You see, Miss Everdeen, I know about the kiss.

Snow flicks a finger to summon the guards. He hands Katniss the roses.

SNOW

Be careful. They have thorns.

Four guards take Katniss away, leading her towards a rose covered arbor to meet a worried Peeta, Prep Team and photographers. Katniss grabs Peeta's hand, gives him a quick terror-filled look; they start posing.

INT. THE CAPITOL GALLERIA/EXHIBIT HALLS - EVENING:

A party is in full swing. Peeta's paintings line the walls; the paintings are quite small, exquisitely detailed, beautifully framed; they are mostly being ignored by the crowd in favor of food and drinks temptingly arrayed on dozens of tables. In one corner Effie is being filmed, floodlit, gesturing at one of Peeta's more abstract compositions. In another corner Haymitch is laughing and drinking with a man (CHAFF) and two women, one surgically

altered (ENOBARIA), the other nearly naked (JOHANNA MASON). The crowd swirls and parts for a moment as everyone turns to greet a handsome, scantily clad man (FINNICK ODAIR). Katniss enters with Cinna. She's dressed beautifully but simply in a modestly cut gown.

KATNISS

Who are they?

CINNA

Victors from earlier Games, Capitol favorites. You'll meet them eventually.

KATNISS

No rush.

Katniss escapes to find Peeta; finds food instead. She's sampling some little dumplings as Peeta finds her.

KATNISS

This is awesome!

PEETA

The paintings?

KATNISS

The dumplings. They taste like springtime.

Peeta grabs a dumpling and follows Katniss into the next gallery. She's stopped at a painting that at first glance is simply a delicate carpet of perfectly rendered white flowers - Queen Anne's Lace. A closer look shows other things buried in the flowers: clasped hands, part of a face.

KATNISS

(tears up)

It's Rue. All in little pieces.

PEETA

Come on. I didn't want you to see that one.

(pulling her to the next painting)

Come on. You'll like this one.

They stop before a painting of shimmering silver, resolving into tiny perfect droplets falling on glimmering stone.

KATNISS

The waterfall. Where I found you.

PEETA

Days. I watched it for days.

KATNISS

It's beautiful.

PEETA

Sort of.

Effie and crew are moving to a new picture. Effie lectures with knowing, authoritative gestures.

KATNISS

What can she be saying?

PEETA

We don't want to know. Let's get some more food.

Peeta and Katniss are grazing their way systematically through the buffet tables. Peeta stops at a little side table with tiny blue crystal glasses. He reaches to sample one. Venia, coming up from behind, grabs Peeta's hand.

VENIA

Oooo. Don't drink it here, drink it in there.

Venia points to what seem to be restrooms. Katniss and Peeta exchange puzzled glances.

VENIA

It's to make you throw up so you can eat more. Go on! I've already been twice. Everyone does it!

Peeta puts the glass down with a distinct click.

PEETA

(to Katniss)

Just when you start thinking they might not be so bad..

Plutarch oils his way through the crowd, aiming towards Katniss.

KATNISS

Oh no. Oh no. Not him.

PEETA

He's sort of okay. Haymitch introduced me. We could use some friends.

PLUTARCH

(detaching Katniss from Peeta)

Now, now. Can't let your lucky fiancée have all the fun. Lovely, simply lovely to meet you, Katniss, my dear. You're all the rage in the Capitol this year, you know.

KATNISS

Um, ah...are you planning next year's

Games yet?

PLUTARCH

Well, they've been in the works for years, of course - Arenas aren't built in a day, you know. But, shall we say, the flavor of the games is being determined right now. In fact, I have a strategy meeting tonight. It starts at midnight. But don't tell - it's a secret.

Plutarch takes out an elaborate pocket watch. He runs his thumb across the face of the watch and for just a moment an image appears, glowing as if lit by candlelight. It's a MOCKINGJAY.

KATNISS

It's a Mockingjay. It looks just like my pin.

PLUTARCH

Glad you like it - it's one of a kind. Must fly now.

INT. VICTORY TRAIN/DINING CAR - MID MORNING

Katniss, Peeta, Haymitch and the Prep Team are all at table, most looking the worse for wear. Haymitch and the Prep Team are passing around little pills. Effie, that model of stamina and efficiency, looks perfect but sounds a bit snappish as she passes out papers.

EFFIE

Itineraries. Arriving District 1 at 2PM. Speeches. See that you memorize them. Photo shoot prep list. Where's Cinna?

KATNISS

Probably getting one of my million outfits ready.

EFFIE

You should be grateful.

KATNISS

I am. I am. Totally grateful, really, Effie.

EXT. DISTRICT 1/ROMAN STYLE STADIUM - AFTERNOON

Katniss and Peeta are giving speeches to a large crowd. TV cameras everywhere. CASHMERE, GLOSS and other Victors

wearing laurel wreaths have prominent seats. Large banners with pictures of TRIBUTES MARVEL and GLIMMER hang everywhere. Marvel and Glimmer's families stand proudly, wearing special garb.

EXT. DISTRICT 1/SCENIC LOCATION - DAY

Katniss and Peeta are posing in new wedding outfits. Peeta is kneeling as if proposing. Cameras everywhere.

EXT. DISTRICT 2/CENTRAL SQUARE - DAY

Katniss and Peeta onstage, seated along with Enobaria, BRUTUS and other crowned Victors. Banners with images of TRIBUTES CATO and CLOVE hang everywhere. A massive outdoor screen is playing a recap of Cato's fight to the death, his final speech censored.

EXT. DISTRICT 2/SCENIC LOCATION - DAY

Katniss and Peeta kissing for the cameras in yet another wedding ensemble.

EXT. DISTRICT 3/CENTRAL SQUARE - DAY

Heavily armed PEACEKEEPERS and sharpshooters line the square and rooftops. Large banners are everywhere bearing the images of the two small, vulnerable-looking Tributes killed in the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games. On the dais, seated near Katniss and Peeta and wearing crowns are Victors BETEE, WIRESS, and a handful of others. The dead Tributes' parents are clinging to each other, fighting tears. The crowd looks restive, some weep. As the ceremony ends, Katniss, Peeta and their team are rushed off, Effie looking indignant.

EXT. DISTRICT 4/SPECTACULAR WATERFRONT LOCATION - MORNING

Katniss and Peeta pose in their most beautiful wedding outfits yet.

EXT. DISTRICT 4/BEAUTIFUL OPEN AIR THEATER - DAY

On stage, Finnick, ANNIE CRESTA and MAGS wear Victor's crowns. Annie is shaking, looking sick, being held by Mags. A big crowd is gathering.

CROWD  
Katniss! Katniss!

A battalion of Peacekeepers moves in for crowd control.

EXT. SEEN FROM MOVING TRAIN - DAY

views of cattle herds, watch towers, barbed wire fencing.

INT. TRAIN/DISTRICT 8/BORDER - EVENING

Peacekeepers board train, search everywhere, examine papers. Effie is indignant but silent. The Peacekeepers disembark and the train gets underway again. Katniss, Peeta, Haymitch, Effie and the rest of the team gather in the lounge.

HAYMITCH  
We've been ordered to bypass District 8.  
Tornado warnings.

EFFIE  
This is terrible. What are we supposed  
to do about the silver brocade wedding  
ensemble?

CINNA  
We'll do a studio shoot.

INT. TRAIN/DISTRICT 11/FLOODLIT BORDER CHECKPOINT - NIGHT

Another security check by armed Peacekeepers; Effie now looking panicky, Haymitch worried.

EXT. DISTRICT 11/CENTRAL SQUARE - DAY

Another stage, another central square, this one hung with banners bearing the images of dead Tributes Rue and THRESH. Crowned Victors Chaff and SEEDER are on stage, as are the tributes' families. The huge crowd and those on stage barely conceal their resentment, their fury. Peacekeepers, heavy artillery and sharpshooters are everywhere. Katniss and Peeta stand at a microphone with prepared speeches in hand.

KATNISS  
(Reading)  
"We, the Victors of the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger  
Games, salute your courage and your  
sacrifice..."

Katniss looks up, meets the hard angry eyes of Thresh and

Rue's families.

KATNISS

No...No...I just, I just...I...want to thank you for your children. I only ever spoke to Thresh one time. Just long enough for him to spare my life. I didn't know him but I always respected him. For his power. For his refusal to play the Games on anyone's terms but his own.

But I feel as if I did know Rue and she'll always be with me. I see her in everything that's beautiful: in meadow flowers, in the Mockingjays that sing in the trees...

OLD MAN IN THE CROWD

(whistles Rue's Mockingjay tune)

As if by plan, every person in the crowd presses the three middle fingers of their left hand against their lips and extends them to Katniss and Peeta. Suddenly, chaos erupts. Shots ring out, the old man falls dead, Peeta grabs Katniss and pulls her down; Haymitch covers both with his body; pushes them towards shelter. Peacekeepers move in weapons trained on the crowd, the families. Armed Peacekeepers arrest Katniss, Peeta, Haymitch, Effie. Machine guns fire.

END ACT 1

ACT 2 EXAMPLE First scene

INT. TRAIN/LOUNGE - NIGHT

Haymitch, Effie, Katniss and Peeta are gathered, disheveled, wearing the same clothes they had on for the District 11 ceremony. Katniss and Peeta are holding hands. Cinna pours Effie a stiff drink. Haymitch is already well supplied.

HAYMITCH

(to Katniss)

See Sweetheart, this is why nobody lets you make the plans.

KATNISS

(whispers)

Where are they taking us?

HAYMITCH

Home. On probation, so to speak.

TO BE CONTINUED BY YOU...