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Writing Class

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Thresh-spective

I crouched in the edge of the field, hidden by the tall grass, peering over weeds at the Cornucopia. I was silent, holding the rock I'd picked up a while ago, my only protection. Still, I considered myself to be a predator in the tall grasses. They were my cloak, my territory, and I didn't need a weapon to be a predator in this terrain. After a few minutes, the arena had brightened up enough by an unseen sun, and light reflected off the golden Cornucopia. I knew there were others waiting at the edge of the forests for the feast. I could tell by the way everything else was silent, and the way an air of urgent danger came over the arena, foreshadowing a fight. The moment was so fragile, as if at any moment, a tribute would break the balance and the whole standstill would erupt in violence. Not yet, though. When the feast came up, then the fighting would begin, and everyone in the arena knew it.

There's a hiss of air as the ground in front of the Cornucopia splits. It opens up and a table covered with a pure white cloth rises, holding four backpacks and a small orange package. I tense, waiting for the right moment to emerge from my domain. Then, right as the table clicks into place, a tribute comes out from the Cornucopia, snatches up the bag marked "5", and runs off to into the woods. I start to stand up and give chase before I realize I can't take the girl out without being attacked by another tribute. But if I don't run, someone will take my supplies, which I'm still not sure what it holds. I hesitate and convince myself that if another tribute comes from the woods, I'll give chase.

Then I spot her. Across from me, I see a light glint of metal among the trees. It's a knife. The girl from District 2 is here. I strain my eyes and try to see farther, muscles tensing, waiting to jump out at the right moment and take my supplies. Suddenly, another tribute jumps out from the woods and sprints towards the table, holding a bow and arrow. There's movement in the trees to the left of her, and the girl from District 2 emerges from the trees, intercepting the other tribute.

The girl from District 2 throws a few knives with deadly accuracy and the other tribute from District 12 responds with arrows, but they clash, the District 2 girl taking down the other tribute. They're distracted, and that's when I make my move.

I rise from the tall grass, holding my rock, and I sprint towards the table. No other tributes jump out from the forest, and I figure I'm safe as long as the other two tributes fight it out. I go behind the two girls, making an effort not to be heard over their struggling, and as I approach, I can hear them talking. One of the tributes yells out, "Peeta!" and I freeze, eyes scanning the edge of the forest. Nothing. I continue towards my pack.

As I approach the table I make out what they're saying. The girl from District 2 has mounted the other tribute. "...We're going to kill you. Just like we did your pathetic little ally... what was her name? The one who hopped around in the trees? Rue? I froze, realizing that I'm facing the girl who killed my teammate. "Well, first Rue, then you, and then I think we'll just let nature take care of Lover boy.." She continues talking, but I stop listening. Rage starts to bubble up inside me. This is the person who killed Rue. This is the person who murdered someone from my district.

I walk over to the two tributes briskly, angered. Then using only one arm, I grab Rue's killer by the collar and lift her off the other girl. She drops her knife. Then, with flip her around

head over heels and throw her onto the ground in one clean movement. Ignoring the other tribute, I yelled at the girl in front of me. “What’d you do to that little girl? You kill her?”

She starts to scramble frantically backwards on all fours. She’s shaking her head. “No! No, it wasn’t me!”

“You said her name. I heard you. You kill her?” I demand. Then I thought about her knife, and a possible scenario brings a new wave of anger over me. “You cut her up like you were going to cut up this girl here?”

“No! No, I -” she says, tripping over her own words. Then, she sees my rock and starts screaming for her teammate. In the distance, I hear her teammate call back, but I’m too mad to even care. With all my fury, I bring my stone above my head and bring it down on the girl’s head. There’s a nasty cracking sound, and I can see I’ve made a dent in her skull. I turn to the other tribute.

“What’d she mean? About Rue being your ally?”

“I – I – we teamed up. Blew up the supplies. I tried to save her, I did. But he got there first. District One.”, she stutters.

“And you killed him?” I demand.

“Yes. I killed him. And buried her in flowers,” she says. “And I sang her to sleep.” Tears start to come to her eyes. I frowned.

“To sleep?” I ask gruffly.

“To death. I sang until she died,” she says. “your district...they sent me bread.” She reaches up and wipes her nose. “Do it fast, okay, Thresh?”

Emotions conflict inside me. This girl honored my teammate. My district thanked her. It would not do well to kill her without paying her back for respecting my teammate. I lower my

rock and point at her, almost accusingly. “Just this one time, I let you go.” I said. “For the little girl. You and me, we’re even then. No more owed. You understand?”

She nods, and I hear another tribute yell from the edge of the forest. “You better run now, Fire Girl.” I say, and, snatching up the remaining backpacks, I run back into my domain.

The boy from District 2 is chasing me, I’m sure. I have their supplies, and I was the one that killed the girl. For the night, I bundle up in the same spot, near the end of the field inside a ditch will hidden by tall grasses. I rest, napping from time to time, the stone my hands. I didn’t bother to see what was in the District 2 backpack. I took theirs because I wanted revenge, not because I wanted to use more supplies. I had all I needed. Inside my own backpack was bread, and lots of it. I’d been eating grain I’d collected for the past few days, and the bread was a big improvement.

The next day, it rains. Water drops fall from unseen clouds above, getting me wet. I hated it. I knew that the boy wouldn’t hunt for me in this kind of weather. It was too easy to make footprints and too easy to be tracked down. Plus, none of us had any waterproof clothing as far as I knew.

I spend the day in my ditch, under a tall tree with yellow and brown leaves, matching the tall weeds that hid me. The day went by slowly, with only occasional thunderclaps. I was confused. If the Gamemakers wanted us to fight to the death, why were they delaying a fight? If they wanted a good show, why didn’t they want us to fight just yet?

The answer comes to me near the evening. Suspense. They are building up suspense. They need time to make a grand finale, a way to bring the remaining tributes together and fight to the death against animals or whatever else the Gamemakers had in mind.

The next day is still no different from the day before. Rain and occasional thunderclaps are the only sounds keeping me company. I decide I can't just wait around when I can be trying to find a way to get a weapon or defeat Cato, so I end up lying under the tree, trying to carve a wooden spear from a branch I'd found on the ground. The branch it was made of tough wood, heavy enough to be thrown and hard enough to not snap. After I peel off the bark, I try to sharpen the tip. It's nearly impossible without a knife, and I regret not taking the one the girl from District 2 had dropped.

In the end, I use my rock to smash down the tip so that it is a dull stake of a spear. It isn't much, but it might make the difference between life and death from what I learned from my mentor.

It's evening when I hear footsteps. I'm in my ditch at that time, holding my spear in one hand and my rock in the other. The footsteps are close by, sloshing in the mud that had formed during the rain. Thunder roared, like a Spartan preparing for battle. I strain my ears to try and pick up the sound again. Tensing my muscles like I always did before a fight, I start to stand up.

Silence. There isn't another sound. I know that the footsteps couldn't have been a small animal because I hadn't seen any through all my time in the grasses. Also, the footstep sounded heavy, meaning it had to be the tribute from District 2.

Then, from my left, a figure leaps from the tall grasses that had hidden me so well. The boy comes at me, spear in hand, roaring like the earlier thunderclap. I yell, and at the last moment, I duck. He tumbles over me and rolls into the ditch. I climb out frantically, still

clutching my stone and spear. The boy gets back up, and switches his grip on his spear, ready to throw. Then, in one swift forward motion, he launches the spear right at my chest.

Adrenaline kicks in, and I see the spear coming at me in slow motion. My body acts on pure instinct as I step to the side and knock the spear away with own. It bounces harmlessly off my wooden spear and falls somewhere to my left. The boy is defenseless.

I stare him down, and start to walk over to him. I want to do this quick and get it over with. Rain drips off the both of us as we prepare for the last tangle. I raise my wooden spear, and, without hesitation, I launch it the forward the way he'd done it. The spear flies in a straight path at his face at speeds I didn't think I could make it reach. I'm so certain I won, but the boy pulls out a knife from his sleeve. He knocks the spear away the way I had done.

While he has a knife, I only have my rock. I'm at a disadvantage in terms of weapons, and I know it. He yells and charges forward, knife raised high. I stand, almost petrified, as he reaches me. His arm comes down, trying to stab me in the downwards direction. I don't let him. Moving instinctively to the left, I knock his arm away with my rock. He steps back, pain flashing in his eyes for a moment, before he comes at me again. This time he's slashing viciously from side to side, and I know there's no way to deflect this one. When he's a few feet from me, I throw my rock, the only weapon I had, at him. He doesn't expect it and the rock hits him on the chest.

The weight of the rock almost knocks him over and he staggers. In less than a second, I'm on him, taking him down and slamming him into the ground. He drops his knife and swings at me furiously. Unlike last time when I had fought the girl from District 2, we don't speak. We just grunt and yell as we swing at each other and beat each other up like cavemen.

He's losing. Blood starts to leak out of his nose. I don't let up and I keep punching at him, swing after swing, each one packed with all the fury of losing my teammate. I'm going to win this. I'm going to be the one going home, not him.

I swing at him one last time, catching him in the jaw. We're both covered with mud, panting, out of breath. Then before I can expect it, he rolls to the left. For a moment, I don't know why. I think he just wants to get away. Then I see it. The spear. I don't stand a chance against him when he has a weapon, so I stand up and I start to run, fast. I dive into the tall grass, and I can hear him crashing in after me. I'm familiar with the tall weeds, though this time they're an obstacle, not sheltering at all.

I run, trying to make my way out of the grass. However, I know I was losing. He's more fit than I, and he's catching up. Sooner or later, he'll catch up to me and spear me.

The Cornucopia. I have a chance if I get to the Cornucopia and find some sort of weapon. There isn't any other place where weapons are available. I continue to crash through the weeds, stumbling a few times. We run, huffing and puffing, like animals.

Finally, I break through into clear field. The Cornucopia is in the distance, a gleaming golden idol in the middle of the arena. I'm almost out of breath, trying to get more air, but I continue running towards it. Behind me, I can hear the other boy stumble into opening and stop. I don't know why, and I don't care. I just want to get to the Cornucopia.

I no longer hear him running after me, and I think that he'd run out of breath. Then I turn around. I was wrong.

He stands a few feet into the clearing, arm back, holding the spear. His muscles ripple and the spear launches forward. It flies straight at me, and this time I don't have anything to

deflect it with. I try to duck or move to the left, but my foot catches on a dip in the dirt and I stumble.

The spear impales me. Pain suddenly washes over me like a flood. I don't have to look down to know it had clearly pierced through my left lung.

I fall to the ground, trying to take another breath. Air, I need air. But air doesn't come. This is it, I think, this is how it ends. Dark spots start to appear in my vision, blotting everything out. The dark spots grow like a fire, and I know I'm dying. I gasp for oxygen, but it doesn't come. Just like Rue, I think. This is how Rue died. Just like Rue.

The dark spots take over my vision, and I stop trying to breathe.

I can feel death take over me, though I'm not afraid. I'm angry. I'm sad. Because, for the first time in my life.

I can finally rest, undisturbed forever.