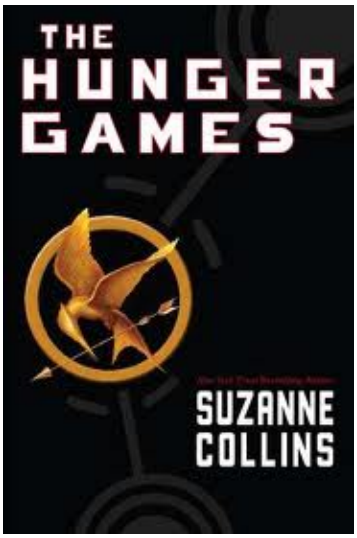
The Hunger Games



If you have not heard of Suzanne Collins [1]' trilogy, The Hunger Games, I must ask what rock you've been sleeping under? The 2008 Young Adult Bestseller has exploded in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, and on the tongues of everyone I come in contact with (or so it seems). Well after being dogged for not reading this book, I finally gave in and read it, determined not to like it to spite all those people who gawked at me for not yet reading it. Unfortunately, my mission backfired on me. I loved it.

Katniss Everdeen lives in District 12 of Panem with her sister, Prim, and their mother. Panem is the future North America broken into twelve districts along with the Capitol, the ruling city and tyrants of this new country. In order to punish the past rebellion of the districts, the Capitol holds an annual "sporting event" called the Hunger Games, which is bet on and televised throughout Panem. The games consist of twenty-four players, a boy and girl taken from each district between the ages of 12 and 18. These are no regular games, however. They are a combination of gladiator and survival games. In order to win, all the other players have to die or be killed, and this year Katniss is forced into the arena. Luckily she has skills that will come in handy. Since her father's death, Katniss has provided food for her family by illegally hunting and gathering in the forests beyond the community. She is deadly with a bow and arrow, and knowledgeable about hunting. But there are a few twists and turns when the boy from her district, Peeta, who was chosen for the games confesses his love. Now not only does Katniss have to be on her feet physically, but also mentally. Is this all just a game? Will her skills help her survive and hunt a new predator?

The humanity of the characters in the arena is tested. Some walked in without a shred of compassion for their fellow players, while others are scared to death. Katniss struggles with this issue. The Capitol is taking away her humanity by pitting her against the other people in the arena, but perhaps there are small rebellions that can keep her from becoming the animal the audience craves to see. If she can't keep from falling into their trap, will it mean she is an animal, or is it tolerable since the games call for her to kill or be killed?

Collins writes in a fast-paced, engaging way that draws you in and makes you want to continue reading. This may be a young adult novel, but I still found it intriguing and the issues mature and compelling. Although Katniss is not the most loving or caring of characters, her fierce spirit and intelligence draw you to her. Peeta definitely supplies the compassionate side that Katniss lacks. Collins did a wonderful job setting the scene for the next books in her trilogy, Catching Fire [2] and Mockingjay [3]. She leaves you guessing as to what will happen next and which characters will reappear in the other books.
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Posted by Kristin M. on Sep 20, 2011

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