



2008

# The Hunger Games

Alison Canar

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Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic, 2008. ISBN 9780439023481. \$17.99. 374 p.

Reviewer: Alison Canar;

Reading Level: Young adult;

Rating: Dependable;

Genre: Adventure stories; Science fiction;

Subject: Survival--Juvenile Fiction; Television Programs--Juvenile Fiction; Contests--Juvenile Fiction;

Imagine if the gladiators' ancient coliseums had the finest technology of the future available to them and the participants in these public displays of violence were children. This is the world of the hunger games. As punishment for past rebellion, districts under the control of the all-powerful capital must sacrifice one boy and one girl for an annual, televised blood-bath. When Katniss Everdeen's younger sister is selected, Katniss doesn't hesitate to take her place. Even though only one tribute should come out alive, the on-screen romance between Katniss and a fellow tribute wins the heart of the audience. Eventually the pair uses their influence to overcome the deadly designs of the capital.

Collins effectively sets the stage for the games. She draws the readers in and leaves them eager to learn what Katniss will face next. However, as Katniss leaves her home town, the story encounters several unfortunate detours. While the battle scenes are gripping, the plot often feels forced. Much of the novel focuses on a love triangle with two missing sides. Katniss never commits herself to either choice. The book leaves the reader with the conclusion of the games, but no resolution of the characters. While the novel is intended to be part of an ongoing series, the pacing still feels off. *The Hunger Games* is a worthwhile exploration of the themes of survival and self-preservation, but struggles with fleshing out the motives of the characters and creating a unified storyline.

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