



2015

# Year of the Jungle

Liz Kazandzhy

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

---

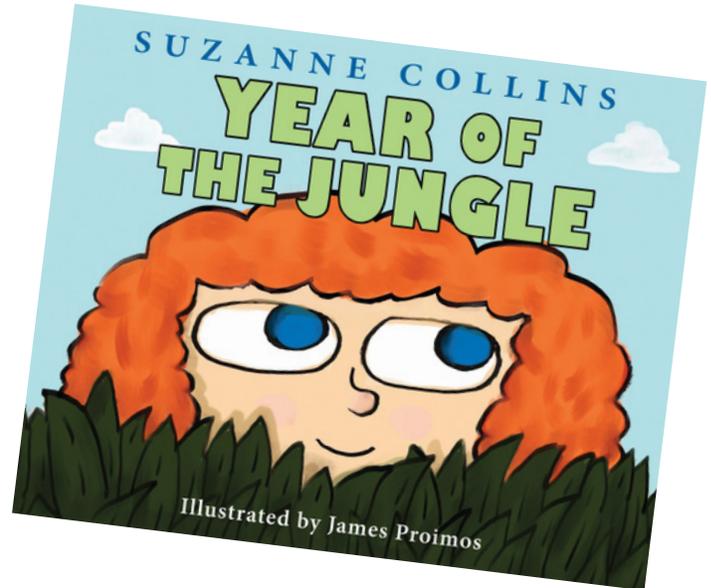
### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Kazandzhy, Liz (2015) "Year of the Jungle," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 36 : Iss. 8 , Article 34.  
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol36/iss8/34>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

# Book Review

**Title:** Year of the Jungle  
**Author:** Suzanne Collins  
**Illustrator:** James Proimos  
**Reviewer:** Liz Kazandzhy  
**Publisher:** Scholastic Press  
**Publication Year:** 2013  
**ISBN:** 9780545425162  
**Number of Pages:** 40  
**Interest Level:** Primary, Intermediate  
**Rating:** Significant Shortcomings



## Review

The *Year of the Jungle* is a children's book written by Suzanne Collins (author of *The Hunger Games*) about the mental journey of a little girl, Suzy, trying to make sense of her father's deployment into Vietnam. At first, ideas about "the jungle" where he's located are pleasant and interesting, but over time, Suzy starts to get worried. People react funny when she tells them where her father is, and his postcards start coming more rarely and have a worried tone to them. One day, Suzy sees on TV what's really going on in Vietnam and becomes more and more afraid. Finally her father comes home, though she notices he's sometimes not as mentally present as he is physically. However, they're finally a family again and slowly get back into their usual routines.

This book is advertised to be a fictional account appropriate for preschoolers and up, but neither of these claims is true. First, it feels much more like simply a non-fiction narrative of Suzanne Collins' experience growing up in a military home, and second, I believe that the content is not suitable for young children. War is a very sensitive topic, and even for children who come from military homes, the way this book is written makes it a "downer" at best and traumatic at worst. The cartoonish illustrations give the impression that it'll be a light-hearted, interesting book, but as you turn the pages, both the words and the pictures get more and more depressing. The only usefulness in this book is for older children, perhaps in a classroom setting to supplement a unit on war or current issues, or for those in military homes who are already struggling, but even then it should be approached very sensitively. Though the author experienced these events as a child, the truth is that this a very adult topic and would best be expressed to an adult audience, not to a preschool audience as a cartoonish yet depressing narrative.

\*Contains mild violence.