

Catching Fire Book Review by Sarina

Catching Fire, the second book in Suzanne Collins' Hunger Games trilogy, continues the story of Katniss Everdeen, now 17 years old, following her victory in the 74th Hunger Games and living in a world that is definitely not meant for any of us, especially someone her age. It did not disappoint.

The story begins with Katniss adjusting to her new life of wealth and abundance in District 12's Victor's Village. Despite her newfound comfort, she continues to hunt to provide for her friends and family. Her relationship with Gale Hawthorne, her longtime hunting partner and friend, has become complicated after their kiss. Katniss's world is shaken further when President Snow pays her an unexpected visit. He threatens her loved ones, demanding that she convince the people of Panem that her final act in the previous Games - attempting a double suicide with Peeta by eating poisonous berries - was motivated by love rather than defiance against the Capitol.

As Katniss and Peeta embark on their Victory Tour, they witness growing unrest in the districts. In District 11, an old man is executed for whistling Rue's four-note mockingjay tune, a symbol of rebellion. Katniss realizes that her actions in the arena have inadvertently sparked a rebellion against the Capitol. To put an end to the uprising, Peeta proposes to Katniss on live television. However, President Snow remains unconvinced. Back in District 12, Katniss learns of a revolt in District 8 and considers fleeing with her loved ones. Her plans are interrupted when she witnesses Gale being brutally whipped by Romulus Thread, the new Head Peacekeeper. This incident, along with the increased oppression in District 12, further fuels Katniss's desire for change.

The story takes a dramatic turn when President Snow announces the rules for the 75th Hunger Games, known as the Quarter Quell. As a cruel twist, the tributes for this year's Games will be reaped from the existing pool of victors. Being the only female victor from District 12, Katniss is forced to return to the arena. Katniss, Peeta, and their mentor Haymitch begin rigorous training for the Games. When the reaping occurs, Peeta volunteers to take Haymitch's place, ensuring he can protect Katniss in the arena. As they prepare for the Games, Katniss and Peeta meet the other tributes, many of whom have known each other for years, adding an extra layer of emotional complexity to the impending bloodbath.

In the Capitol, Katniss and Peeta encounter a mix of allies and potential threats among the other tributes. They meet the charming but dangerous Finnick Odair from District 4, the abrasive Johanna Mason from District 7, and the intelligent duo Wiress and Beetee from District 3. Katniss also forms a bond with Mags, an 80-year-old tribute from District 4.

During the interviews, Katniss's stylist Cinna makes a bold statement by transforming her wedding dress into a mockingjay costume, further stoking the flames

of rebellion. This act of defiance leads to Cinna's brutal beating just before Katniss enters the arena.

The arena for the 75th Hunger Games is designed like a clock, with different deadly threats activated in each sector at specific times. Katniss quickly allies with Finnick, who saves Peeta's life early in the Games. They are later joined by Johanna, Wiress, and Beetee. As the Games progress, Katniss begins to suspect that many of the other tributes are trying to keep her and Peeta alive, though she doesn't understand why. The alliance faces numerous challenges, including poison fog, blood rain, and vicious monkey mutts. They also encounter jabberjays that mimic the screams of their loved ones, a particularly cruel psychological torture.

Beetee devises a plan to electrocute the remaining tributes by running a wire from a lightning-struck tree to the saltwater beach. During the execution of this plan, chaos erupts. Johanna attacks Katniss, cutting out her tracker, and Katniss is separated from Peeta. In a moment of desperation and inspiration, Katniss shoots an arrow wrapped in wire into the force field surrounding the arena just as lightning strikes. The explosion that follows destroys the arena, and Katniss is rescued by a hovercraft. She learns that there has been a plan all along to break the tributes out of the arena, orchestrated by Plutarch Heavensbee, the Head Gamemaker who is actually a rebel leader. Katniss also discovers that her home, District 12, has been bombed and destroyed by the Capitol in retaliation for her actions. And it ends with Katniss learning of the destruction of her home and the fate of her loved ones uncertain. How amazing of a cliffhanger is that? I rate *Catching Fire* a 9/10.