



## Mockingjay

*Suzanne Collins*

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The third book in Suzanne Collins's phenomenal and worldwide bestselling Hunger Games trilogy is now available in paperback.

"My name is Katniss Everdeen. Why am I not dead? I should be dead."

Katniss Everdeen, girl on fire, has survived, even though her home has been destroyed. There are rebels. There are new leaders. A revolution is unfolding.

District 13 has come out of the shadows and is plotting to overthrow the Capitol. Though she's long been a part of the revolution, Katniss hasn't known it. Now it seems that everyone has had a hand in the carefully laid plans but her.

The success of the rebellion hinges on Katniss's willingness to be a pawn, to accept responsibility for countless lives, and to change the course of the future of Panem. To do this, she must put aside her feelings of anger and distrust. She must become the rebels' Mockingjay - no matter what the cost.

## **Mockingjay Details**

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## From Reader Review Mockingjay for online ebook

### Kiki says

[**This just in:** the movie adaptation, *Mockingjay: Part 1*, was absolutely outstanding. I've seen both of the other movies for this series, and while I enjoyed them greatly, the third instalment was on another level entirely. It's one of the best movies I've seen in a very, very long time. Good job, movie people. You made a meh book into a stellar piece of cinema.]

Those two stars are for the last ten pages, which were absolutely outstanding. Probably the best ten pages of the series. The 380 pages before that, however, deserve nothing. The first 380 pages can kiss my ass.

This book was a fucking slog. I kid you not. This book tried me to the point of breaking. About halfway through, I was ready to feed the damn thing to my dog.

I'm not the biggest *Hunger Games* fan. Y'all know that. However, when I read *Catching Fire*, after its predecessor disappointed me, I was STOKED to read *Mockingjay*. *Catching Fire* was just fantastic. I really, really and truly enjoyed it.

*Mockingjay* was a bloodbath. If you're sensitive to pointless deaths and gratuitous violence, then this is not the book for you.

Actually, I like that word. **Gratuitous**. It describes this book perfectly. Everything in this book was gratuitous and over the top, from the wangst to the ridiculous romantic interludes in the middle of battle scenes, and from the candy-gore violence to the stupid, overly-disgusting deaths of several characters who did not need to die. There's also the writing, which is so overwrought - it's not even like the author took the sparseness of the first book and butchered it. It's like she took the sparseness, fed it to her dog, fed the dog to a crocodile, fed the crocodile to a Tyrannosaurus rex, cut the Tyrannosaurus rex up into steaks, sold the steaks in Soho to a cabaret dancer, A-bombed the cabaret dancer's house, collected the ashes, mixed them into fluorescent paint, and then splattered the paint all over the White House in D.C. Because we, as readers who have stuck by and read the entire series through, need an entire page of Creative Writing Class explanation on what the Hanging Tree song means. It's like in the first book, when we were constantly being told exactly what the dandelions represent. And in *Catching Fire*, when the meaning being the clock was spelled out in an "I AM SYMBOLISM" manner. Everything, from Katniss's clothes (which she's weirdly fixated with) to her circular, drier-than-Egyptian-sand inner monologues were painstakingly pored over to the point of ridiculousness. Yes. Ridiculousness. Shall I repeat that again? Ridiculousness.

One more time? No? Ridiculousness.

*Ridiculousness.*

Contrary to the masses, I love reading books where loads of lovable characters die in the final fight. I love going through that grief, feeling the torment of watching one of my beloved friends die a bloody death. In fact, in my own work, I have a death list. I kid you not. I literally have a list of the most beloved characters, and I've put stars in red pen against all those who die.

There are *many* red stars on that list.

But what I do not enjoy, and what I found far too much of in *Mockingjay*, are pointless deaths. Deaths that don't ensure anyone else's survival, are excessively undignified, or never grieved for. Finnick, Mesalla, Mitchell, Boggs, and Cinna all died ridiculous deaths that really did nothing to aid Katniss's bringing down the Capitol. Essentially, they were all just Mauve Shirts, and they had been all along. I mean, fine. If the author wanted to kill these characters, go ahead and do it. It's actually not the fact that the characters died that bothered me. Yes, I was absolutely distraught over the death of Finnick (he just married Annie! Annie was pregnant! What the fuck kind of sadist kills that?) but given the choice myself? I'd probably kill him too. But the way in which Finnick dies is nonsensical.

YA is a tricky field in which to write dystopian. True dystopian always deals with death. It always deals with untimely death, tragic lives and terrible situations in which people are abused and scarred, in any and every way. But YA is inspiring to young people. YA is a window to different ideologies and -isms held up by other people; for instance, *Mockingjay* is a clear message against war. But YA is also meant for a broad audience of a younger age, and that comes with a responsibility to instill a message that yes, will inspire, but coax some kind of hope out of readers. Some kind of desire to be a better person. Some kind of knowledge that there are wonderful things in the world worth salvaging, and weathering difficult patches in life will ultimately result in a brighter future.

This sounds idealistic, I know. But this series is shelved in Children's. Kids as young as 12 are picking these books up, and what are they finding? The world sucks. People suck. Give up, and stop caring, because nothing good will ever come of trying. Perseverance will get you nowhere. Suicide and alcoholism will make you feel better.

*No.*

Where is Katniss? Who's the drugged-up shadow that's replaced her? In *Mockingjay*, this fickle, doom-and-gloom girl is not the battleaxe we met in *The Hunger Games*. This Katniss is constantly waking up in hospital, taking drugs and completely losing the will to fight for the people she loves. Her voice is flat, drab, full of a whole lot of wangst surrounding the *love triangle* that, during the latter half of the book, became one of the very main concerns. What? I hear a lot of guff about this not being a romance, but it's quite clear that it is. And the scene in Tigris's cellar when Katniss pretends to sleep, but actually lies awake listening to Gale and Peeta talk about how they both love her unconditionally, and are perfectly fine to let her choose who she'll pick like a carton of juice off the shelf in the supermarket, and who she'll dump on his ass? Brought back some pretty pungent T-word memories. Gale and Peeta have absolutely no self-respect, and this scene was totally unrealistic. People do not behave like that in real life. Think about it: you're sitting facing the person who you know has been fooling around with the person you wholeheartedly love, and have done for years. The person you one day see yourself marrying. Are you really going to say, "Oh, I know how he/she feels about you. I know he/she has been making out with you behind my back, just after making out with me. I'm cool with that. I get it. No biggie." Don't even lie. I know that if I were Peeta or Gale, I'd be absolutely furious with Katniss. I'd demand to know why I was being toyed with, used even, and frankly? I'd walk away. I'd pick up my dignity and get out of there, because being treated like a piece of chewy candy in a pack of two that she can't decide whether or not to eat is an insult, and unspeakably degrading.

I kind of wanted Katniss to end up alone. Yes, once I'd forced myself to come to terms with the fact that that wasn't going to happen, I did enjoy the last ten pages greatly. Greatly. They were quite beautiful, actually, as long as I pushed myself to suck up everything I hated about the miserable and hopeless tone of this book. What I didn't enjoy was Gale's end. What happened to him? Oh, he's in District 2. And what's he doing in District 2? Dunno. How did he get there? Dunno. Why did he go there? Dunno. How does he feel about Katniss being with Peeta out of default, not either one's choice? Dunno. What's he going to do with his life

now? Where is he going to live? What's going to happen to this character that we've been forced upon for almost three whole books, and 1200+ pages, and who's played a huge part in the story of Katniss's life?

Uh...I dunno.

I also couldn't believe Katniss's trial just happened without us. What the heck? Katniss is moping and plotting her suicide **gratuitously** in her room in the Capitol, and then one day Haymitch wanders in and says, "Your trial's over. You're free as a bird."

Yes, Katniss is free as a bird. She goes home and lives out the rest of her days as she pleases (and her mother just buggers off too, like Gale did. Where's your mom, Katniss? "Oh, somewhere.").

This whole thing felt like a sputtering fizzle-out of what really should have been a fantastic series. Part way through *Catching Fire*, I was considering that this series may even be literary, but *Mockingjay* spat on that. This is commercial YA, through and through. Yeah, the strong message about war and the hopelessness of Katniss tries to cover it up, but it has everything: silly love triangle, cackling villain, and the fate of the world resting on a teenager's shoulders. What's that? Oh, yeah. This is silly. Silly.

Katniss's *Mockingjay* role was equally silly. One minute Katniss is insisting, "I'M THE MOCKINGJAY BITCH!" and then the next, she says that she just doesn't care about it. She doesn't care about the *Mockingjay*, or all the stupid TV spots they do, or anything really. And then BAM!

"I'M THE MOCKINGJAY BITCH!"

Katniss got on my nerves here. As did her constant use of *arrows* in futuristic combat. What is that? Since when was there an explosive that could fit on the head of an arrow and blow up an entire airship?

Why am I even trying to reason this?

The bow and arrows did not have a place in the world of *Mockingjay*. It seemed overwhelmingly stupid for Katniss to still be using arrows, a prehistoric weapon, when everyone else around her was using firearms and bombs. There's also the "sheath" business, which is just ridiculous. It literally takes 0.40 seconds to Google "bow and arrows" and find that arrows are held in a quiver. See? Simple!

The writing in this book irritated me. The first hundred pages are almost comically boring, and the prose suffers under nonsensical fragments, run-on sentences and huge internal monologues in the middle of conversations. It's just damn hard to read.

*Mockingjay* was such a flop for me. While the idea of exploring PTSD in war veterans was very interesting, it was employed in such a way that it brought the narrative in this book to a painful grind. There was absolutely no hope left within Katniss, and her complete derailment just destroyed any hope left in the message of this book. The writing was irritating, the deaths pointless, the violence totally over-the-top.

*Mockingjay* was a great big depressing *flop*.

**Bonus Time!**

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## **Kat Kennedy says**

This review has spoilers!

Bitches...

What were you doing when you were 16? Checking your boobs each morning to see if the Boob Fairy had paid you a visit? Sneaking out of the house to the park down the street where you and your six friends would share a single can of beer and pretend you're drunk? Making out? Homework? Fighting with your parents? Watching scary movies?

Katniss is sixteen years old and she's been in two Hunger Games, fighting against twenty-odd opponents to the death. Then she becomes the symbol of the rebel leadership and helps overthrow an evil empire before she can legally drink.

So I suppose it's really ridiculous of anyone to expect her capable of then going on to be president of this new world after everything she's been through. Nobody would be evil enough to force that on her considering her fragile mental state...

Except me.

[image error]

Maleficent and I go way back...

But this is fantasy, right, it's not like children or teenagers are really capable of this much! It would be totally unrealistic of me to expect much more of Katniss considering all she's done...

Well, except for the cute little nine-year-old Htoo twins who lived in the Karen National Rebel camp when the enemy came and all the soldiers ran away leaving their AK-47's. These two nine-year-olds thought it'd be a hoot to pick up a few guns and hold off the entire invading Burmese army... successfully.

And that would be a really cute story except for the fact that they went on to create their own army who were convinced that these two little chain-smokin' tykes had magical powers and were invincible.

But I mean, they're a fluke! It's not like any other kids did great things. Well, unless you're counting Iqbal Masih who was made a slave at the age of five and chained to his loom for twelve hours a day. Still, the little tyke managed to escape when he was ten so he only had to endure the first half of his life with unspeakable cruelty and torturous living conditions that left him unable to grow.

Luckily, when he got out he ran off into the sunset and lived happily ever after. \*Kat is interrupted by whispering\* Wait - what? He didn't? \*More whispering\* He joined the Bonded Labor Liberation Front of Pakistan as their spokesperson, going RIGHT back into the slave trade that had abused and tormented him for five years so that he could rescue another three THOUSAND children from slavery?

Shit.

Get off the computer you lazy little cow and go rescue some child slaves!

Oh and by the way, he only stopped after two years because he'd affected carpet manufacturing so much that carpet export in those years dropped by **\$200,000,000** and he was assassinated in 1995 for being too damn awesome.

At 12 years old my greatest achievement was not killing myself while I shaved my legs!

I wasn't going to mention St Joan of Arc because that comparison would be a little too easy but since I have time I'll just quietly mutter that she helped lead France to a number of tactical defeats in the Hundred Year's War, crowned a King and was Burned as a witch before she was nineteen years old.

But, no, it's too much to ask that Katniss step up into a role like that! After all, she had PTSD and she was traumatized. It would be evil for any adult to keep her on retainer as a figurehead to inspire the people. Which, by the way, if I were an adult in power in this particular world - I would totally do.

But Katniss isn't the only one I'd keep to do my bidding. I'd keep Peeta around too. Occasionally, I'd pull them out of their little therapy/rejuvination bubble to do short propos on how the new unified nation was moving forward in positive steps and how everything was improving.

And since I am only moderately evil and am actually very fond of Katniss and Peeta, I find the fact that they were allowed to go home and live out their quiet little lives peacefully to be very unrealistic. In fact, it was the only really unrealistic thing in this novel and let's remember that I'm including genetically altered mutts and beams that can melt your skin off on that list!

So she did a little thing like shooting President Coin. Let's be realistic. Until a few days earlier, the Capitol didn't even know who President Coin was and every single district apart from 13 probably had never seen her. She has the personality of a dead fish left on hot concrete for three days that had been shat on - and the charisma to match! I doubt many of the residents of district 13 even held any great love for her! Most of the

population of Panem was probably going to immediately assume that President Coin somehow had it coming. After all, if Katniss shoots you - you probably did something bad. Something very, very bad!

The election of Paynor was just ridiculous and unrealistic. You have a nation so fractured that it's fourteen different districts have never cooperated or worked or even really MET each other. Plus the fact that they're in economic collapse and dealing with the fallout of a costly war.

I just can't bring myself to believe that they wouldn't drug Katniss up, put her smiling face on stage and have some kind of deciding power working behind closed doors while Katniss waved happily to the smiling faces and kissed babies.

It reminds me of that scene in Ender's Game when Ender is reminiscing about how he's just won the war as one of the greatest generals of recent history and suddenly, in the clean up effort, he's become useless because the adults don't think that the same leadership and skills it requires to lead an army, could also be useful to rebuild a world.

But Katniss and Peeta have the perfect matching set of skills to help put the world back together and they already have the love and trust of most of the population! I'm not saying they'd want to do it. I'm saying I doubt, realistically, that they'd have a choice in the matter.

Now, apart from the ending - which I didn't mind, just was baffled by - I loved and adored this book.

Peeta's hijacking was devastating, Katniss' mental breakdown was harrowing. Finnick! \*cries\* and I'd really held out that maybe somehow Cinna had survived and been kept as a prisoner like Peeta - but alas, no! And everytime he was mentioned in the costuming etc I wanted to cry.

The battles, the politics, it was all such an amazing novel and the end to an amazing series. I'm honestly in love with Suzanne Collins because she's such a brave writer. She's not scared to go to dark places and she's not scared to scar her characters up a bit. She's happy to take the audience out of their comfort zone and I LOVE that about her.

Catching Fire and Mockingjay could never match the perfect pacing and brilliant plot of The Hunger Games but they're still amazing books full of suspense, action, great characterization and thoughtful dialogue. They reflect circumspectly on our society as Collin's asks us to see ourselves through the eyes of Katniss.

I've heard a little bit of mumbling about the relationship between Peeta and Katniss. It's interesting to bring up because I've heard the concept that Katniss doesn't deserve Peeta a lot. Why? Is she as patient, devoted and understanding of Peeta and he is of her? Absolutely not. Katniss regularly fails at patient and kind. I'd also highly doubt that this would come of any shock to Peeta. He didn't fall in love with her not knowing who she was. He's watched her for years and he has ALWAYS been the one to feel more deeply, act unselfishly in her favor and to give more of himself. That's who they are as a couple. Katniss on the other hand, I'm relieved to say, is a female character who isn't hung up on emotions and the postures of love. She loves Peeta enough to make herself sick and crazy at the thought of what's happening to him - but she's also a functional, strong person who has a job to do. She's not like Bella who falls to pieces when Edward leaves. She can't afford to and she's never been one to sit around and obsess over how perfect Peeta's hair is or comment on his body like it's a marble statue.

I guess what I'm saying is that if Peeta feels like he deserves Katniss and vice versa, then who am I to argue?

So whilst I didn't satisfactorily buy the ending, I really loved this book and highly recommend this series - even if I had to out myself as an evil, plotting witch with political aspirations of taking over the world to do it!

\*Can I also just add that Katniss' mother is the saddest excuse for a human being - in reality, she's a sack of shit who should never have had children. I can't think of more horrible things to call her right now because I'm so angry at her! Gah!

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### **Tatiana says**

**Update 11/28/14.** So, of course I had to read it again after getting only half of the story from the Mockingjay movie. Unsurprisingly, cried and cried again. My feelings basically remain the same about this installment. Structurally, the novel is quite messy. There is such a big game going on and Katniss' motivations and actions don't always make sense to me. But the ending is brilliant, especially the final chapters.

I need something to cheer me up ASAP.

Let's face it, a series is only as good as its last book. Is a kitchen towel drenched in my tears a good indicator of the quality of Mockingjay? I think it is, considering that I am not a crying-over-books type. I think this book is a **FANTASTIC** ending of a **FANTASTIC** series.

The book is lying next to me now, so deceitful in appearance, with its innocent, bright, cheerful cover. Who knew there would be so much darkness hidden between its pages, so much heartache? Mockingjay is indeed a **DARK, DARK** book full of deaths, sacrifices, torture, betrayal and despair, a book which takes you to a very disturbing but very real place.

I have no doubt the novel will have thousands of readers livid, especially the crowd of readers who mistakenly think *The Hunger Games* trilogy is mostly dedicated to Team Gale/Team Peeta dilemma with some revolt thrown in as a picturesque backdrop. These books are about love indeed, but they are also about survival, freedom, and peace.

I find it amazing that people are disappointed that Katniss doesn't take a Katniss-becomes-a-superwoman-and-takes-over-the-world-while-deciding-on-which-boy-to-pick route. How realistic is it to expect a *child* damaged by hunger, oppression, and violence she had to witness and take a part in, and thrown into the midst of all kinds of political intrigue, to achieve that? How many soldiers do you know who came out of a war unscathed or empowered by the atrocities they have witnessed? How many children?

This is why this book has such a great effect on me. It takes a very difficult but honest route, portraying the infinitely damaging consequences of war (regardless of the righteousness of its cause) and Katniss's journey to stay true to herself and do the best she can. And the love triangle resolution. Truly, it couldn't have ended any other way.

Is Mockingjay a perfectly written book? Absolutely not, it's not nearly as perfectly constructed or clear as The Hunger Games, but just like another imperfectly perfect successful series finale - Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - it brings its message across in the most honest and powerful way possible.

Suzanne Collins is a genius, she is fearless and I have a great respect for the gutsiness of hers that didn't allow her to settle for an ending all wrapped up in pink paper with a perfect little bow. I am sure she knew that the faint of heart would be enraged. But she stuck to her guns and stayed true to her message and to her characters.

The question now is how will I recover from PTSD of my own caused by *Mockingjay*? It will probably take me months and a score of *Georgia Nicolson diaries* to get over it. But I love this book anyway, in spite (and because) of all the pain it has caused me.

*Real.*

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### **Meredith Holley says**

I guess, sometimes our emotional bones need to be re-broken in order to set them right. Maybe this was a common experience for those who read this book, but a lot of its most emotional points were like reading a bizarre dream about the last few years of my own life. I'm not going to go into it because that would be, like, an unacceptable amount of over-share, even for me. That's just to say that I have no ability to be objective about it. This story: real or not real?

I love *Mockingjay* like I love *The Prophet* and *Catcher in the Rye*, and of course anything by Willa Cather and Dostoevsky. They're all books that have at one time or another spoken to me on such a personal and emotional level that they mean something more than writing or storytelling. That is only a personal reaction, not a recommendation. Actually, it makes me not want anyone else to read the book ever. I want to keep it as my own because I don't want to hear a bunch of fools say they think the names are funny or something like that.

There are many threads of meaning and themes you could take from this story, but the one that strikes me as profound right now, a few days removed from my reading, is, *why are we so goddamn powerless?* Is it apathy or, maybe, discouragement? Are we powerless against other people or government systems, or are people and systems only symbols of our general powerlessness against the universe? Throughout this book, there is a steady rhythm of characters reminding Katniss of her power and describing her power to her.

I did some research recently about fundamental attribution error, and I've probably already told you about it, but I'm going to again. Basically, the theory of fundamental attribution error says that we think that we make our own life choices because we are tossed in the wind and the crazy, random happenstance of outside forces makes us who we are. But we think other people make the choices they do because of natural inclination. Like, someone who murders might think she did so because of an unplanned series of unfortunate events, but an observer thinks the killer did so because she is naturally a murderer. This story creates an interesting contrast between the way Katniss sees herself and the way others see her. She only sees the random events that lead her to become the symbol of rebellion against tyranny. Others see her as the natural embodiment of the symbol. And I think this says a lot about all of us and the things we choose to do or to ignore. I think Collins would say we are powerless because we have abandoned our power, or perhaps because we don't remind each other that we have power.

There are some beautiful moments in other stories, like *The House of Flying Daggers* and *Hamlet*, where the tragedy of the conflict culminates in good friends battling each other. Nominally, they fight out of some shallow sense of vengeance, but ultimately I think it's more the total injustice of loss that motivates them. I

think they fight because if you can fight you are still alive, and sometimes that's all that's left. Maybe what Dylan Thomas meant when he said, "Do not go gentle into that good night / Rage, rage against the dying of the light." There are a lot of moments in this book that make me think of that image of friends fighting each other, but really fighting something more abstract and unconquerable. We fight, maybe, as some kind of animal scream in the face of the cold universe. But, Collins also shows how we fight because of the warm arms and kind hearts of the people we love. We fight because we are wrong and evil and stupid and cunning and loving and compassionate and fierce. There's no simple answer.

Reading the other books in this series, I identified on a personal level with the political and cultural commentary. The way Collins held up a mirror to my own apathy and opulence was a slap in the face. This book meant so much to me emotionally and personally that I hate to pretend that my reaction is political at all. This book, to me, was the story of what happens when suddenly the person you trusted the most in the world sees everything you do as evil. I don't think I've ever seen someone write about that, and I was totally unprepared for the experience of reading it. Do you become evil because you've lost that person? Does their definition of you become your own? Do you sacrifice everything to repair the relationship? If they don't know what's real, how do you? It was so beautiful and tragic to watch that in this book, and it resonated on such a personal level with me, that after reading it I had to rebuild a lot of how I see myself.

On the other hand, I feel like it is important to acknowledge the cultural/political side of this story, and that, while this series is stylized, it is not much of a step away from reality. It, like all of Collins' writing that I have read so far, is about adults training children to kill children. And that's what we do, right? In Africa, the Middle East, Russia, America, in uniform and out of uniform, we train children to kill children.

I'm sure you've all already seen the wikileaks about the American soldiers shooting the Reuters photographers and later wounding children who were riding in the ambulance coming to help the photographers. If you haven't seen it yet, the linked article also links to the video. One of the most disturbing things to me about that video is how the soldiers laugh. Real or not real? I couldn't watch the whole thing. When people get in fights on the listserv at school, we call it a "flame war." Do we call it that here on GR? Anyway, a student posted that video to the listserv last spring, asking, *if that video is something that we now know about, how many other incidents like this have happened and not been released to the public?* That post started an outrageous flame war on the listserv, in which a couple of the military guys threatened the poster. People who I generally respect and even look up to in some ways said things like, "This is your final warning!" and argued that it is unacceptable to question people in uniform because without their sacrifices, we wouldn't have the freedom to question them. Even aside from the circular logic, that argument just makes me go ballistic. And I think that is exactly the labyrinth of war that Collins writes about.

Everything she did here is beautiful, even, at times, poetic. I love that she didn't glorify the rebels, and I love the image of communism she gives as much as her version of capitalism. It makes sense that she published this story in three parts, but I think it could also be read as one whole. I love her characters and her thoughtful messages. I love the way her relationships fall apart and grow back together. I almost had to stop reading this book partway through because it was too painful. But I think it was a stern talking-to that I needed. This story real or not real? For me, real.

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## Hope says

I'm never very good at predicting outcomes. Nothing I could've predicted would have been quite as good as

this. Although I did get close (a very distant "close") on a few things, and I was right in saying that it wouldn't be walking through a field of flowers and sunshine.

A book like this just *couldn't* be.

It's good, and yet not good. Because it's good in a very heartbreakin, chilling, haunting, intense way.

Katniss is a different person from the first two books. I found her softer, more thoughtful, and also more open (granted, she's still kind of a brat sometimes. But don't we all have our moments?). In the first two books, even though the story is told by her, she's very closed off with us. This book is filled with more emotion, and I liked her best in this book, even though it's a tragedy of sorts.

As I'm stewing over the novel I read every word of yesterday, I think, "Did I *really* love it?" And then, "How could I *love* it?" I shake my head. I can't love something so terribly sad and at times grotesque. Something so painful.

Truthfully, I don't think I loved it. Love isn't the right word. It was a fantastic novel. I don't think I can come up with any better way for a trilogy of this kind to come to a close. The perfect note of sadness and sweetness, pain and healing all mixed up in a jumble. This book was far more severe than the first two. Much harder to read, and with more emotional depth, I think. Sometimes I just had to close the book for a while and breathe because I needed to stop for a bit, to regroup myself so I could get through a certain part.

Collins wove in a few questions to ponder. Where do you draw the line? Do you give just what you got? Should you show mercy to those who haven't shown mercy to you? Is it right to kill innocent people just because the leaders on their side of the line killed innocent people on your side?

Contrary to what some believe, this is not an anti-war book. Actually, I think Collins is trying to get us to ask ourselves questions about what justifies war, and where the line should be drawn between justice and vengeance. Not that we shouldn't fight, but that we know what's worth fighting for.

Several notable characters die. It's painful, and it hurts to read it. Some believe that these characters didn't get enough homage. But since this is told from first-person, maybe it's just too painful for Katniss to dwell on those deaths.

The last three pages make all the heavy, intense, painfulness of the rest of the book almost worth it, in a strange way. Bittersweet is the perfect word. The sense of loss underlying the message that life really does goes on, even when we don't see how it possibly can.

Sometimes we need a little help to pick ourselves off the floor and start again.

I wasn't disappointed with the ending, but I am disappointed that it's the end. It left me feeling emotionally drained and like I'd lost something. I'm not sure if I'm shell-shocked or simply worn out by the intensity of it all. I'm glad, in a way, that it ended like it did. I'm also sad, and a little confused. Not because I didn't like the ending, but because I simply feel emptied out for the time being.

I just wish...I wish that there could have been more happiness for these characters that I love so much. I think that unfulfilled wish is, at the end of the day, why I'm feeling this way right now. In time the feeling will pass, I know, but at the moment I'm sorry for it. No matter how I enjoyed this book (and I did, I really did), I'm in a sort of grieving state. Happiness was there in the end, but it just wasn't enough to compensate for all the sadness.

Then again, I think that was the point.

It's a very rare thing to find a trilogy like this one, and I'll always hold a place in my heart for the girl who was on fire.

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{pre-release}

Waiting for this is torturous. I finished Catching Fire and wanted this in my hands *immediately*. Oh Suzanne, please let Peeta live (without becoming seriously maimed {again}, either)! :'(

I know it's stupid, but I want a happy ending. Not like uber-happy, of course, I'm not unrealistic...but I just want to finish this trilogy humming and skipping around the house (yeah, laugh. I don't care! ;)) rather than lying around depressed afterwards wondering what went wrong...'cause I just hate when that happens.

P.S. I'm not making any predictions because it feels like either my wishful thinking or my most dreaded outcome. I can't find a balance in between. Call me weird.

All I can say without bias is that the ending will *not* be all walkin' in a field of flowers and happiness. :P

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### **Jayna says**

SPOILERS!!!

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Ugh. I was just thankful that I decided to be grown-up and not wait until midnight to get this book and then stay up all night reading it. I kindled it early this morning and ignored my kids for 4 hours and got through it. This book makes you realize how much the storyline in the first two depended upon the tension created by the love triangle. In Mockingjay, the author robs her readers of what they (I) crave! By the end, everything is so messed up that Peeta vs. Gale became "OH snap. Who even cares anymore?" I couldn't help but be disappointed--it was so violent, everyone dies (I CANNOT forgive Collins for taking away both Finnick and Prim!!) and even though there is a nicely packaged epilogue, I wanted more...EXPECTED more out of this final installment. I have to chalk this work up to "Twilight Syndrome"...gifted authors with an original page-turning first book, followed by hurried, increasingly poorly written and thought-out sequels.

Bottom line: You have to read it, but don't spend money on it- wait and borrow it from your friend. And then fondly recall the excellence of the first book.

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### **karen says**

these are the things i have done for this book:

i have given up my birthday, waiting in line from 5 until its midnight release, braving the crowds and noise and commotion...

i have missed my subway stop and ended up taking the crappy way into work...

i have seriously considered calling out of work to sit at home and finish it...

i have read in elevators, while walking down the street, walking up the stairs, while eating dinner without even tasting it...

i have rushed my beloved dawn powell's book, racing through it so i could get to this book as quickly as possible...

i have come home to a laundry bag full of clothing that needed to be folded and a bunch of dishes that needed to be done - ignoring which usually gives me mental discomfort... but i did...

i have thrown off my netflix schedule for the week...

i have read this book in one day, and now i am wanting more...

\*\*\*\*\*

i just realized that this book comes out the day after my birthday. which means i will then be 33, and will have waited in anticipation for a TEEN FICTION book for almost a year. and i will probably read it in a day, and afterward feel utterly shattered with *lacking*. and then i can go be a grown-up again.

but for now, i can't help it, it's that good of a series, and i have given up any adult-shame i might have felt for bouncing up and down in my skin with wanting this book this very minute.

32 and still a child...

come to my blog!

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### **Heather says**

How do I begin to convey my disappointment? I suppose it all comes down to expectations and as mine were not met, I feel vastly underwhelmed, and a little bit devastated. When I read HungerGames, I was enthralled. I thought Katniss was intelligent, resourceful, and displayed tremendous strength in character. Moreover, Katniss's arc appeared to parallel with the overall arc of the story/series. As Katniss grew more bold, so did the remaining characters and the uprising initiative. I expected this to continue in Catching Fire. However, Katniss appeared to stagnate, whereas the remaining characters and overall story arc continued on without her. By the end of book 2, Katniss was still in "survivor" mode, and failed to deliver anything beyond demonstration of those already proven survival instincts that we readers discovered in book 1. Nonetheless, my love for HungerGames left me with hope that Katniss would finally step into her role as not only a symbol of hope and rebellion against tyranny, but as a leader in an uprising that opposes oppression, and emboldens freedom of choice and will. Much to my dismay, it never occurs.

Perhaps I am mistaken, but I was under the impression that this series was meant to be about revolting against a corrupt, freedom suppressing government and replacing it with a new government that not only condones freedom in all its forms, but fosters it, allowing it to thrive. For this to be an achievable story arc, Katniss has to develop into something more than a resourceful hunter, shooter of arrows, and unpredictable pawn. She has to embolden herself, as the districts have had to embolden themselves, grab her title as MockingJay by the balls, and make her own choices, cut her own path, and shoot down those who stand in her way literally and figuratively. Otherwise what is the point of revolution if the very person who made it possible doesn't follow through?

But in MockingJay we don't get an emboldened Katniss, we simply get more of the same, actually, we get less than the same. When Katniss isn't hiding in closets, passed out from injuries, strung out on morphine, or walking around the compound in a near catatonic state, Katniss will exert herself in her typical yet unpredictable brash reactor form, always manipulated by those around her. She still lacks control over her life. She isn't a warrior in the rebellion, she is a weapon, a tool, a pawn. Other times she is completely useless all-together. She is dictated to and she may or may not deliver. Where did the potential leader go I ask you?

This late in the game, Katniss needed to grow as a character, to complete the story arc, if not her own character's journey, properly. Katniss has been used to spur the other districts into revolution because she is supposed to possess strength in character as seen in the Hunger Games. She is now the face of the revolution, whether she meant to be or not. The districts have become inspired by the ball busting Katniss they perceive her to be, and it's a lie. Turns out she isn't opposed to being used as long as it's people she knows calling the shots (District 13). I would have been fine with this course of events had they appeared in CatchingFire. But by the final installment, Katniss needed to be in charge of her own fate, to understand her role, to be a role model. Instead I felt as though I was reading the POV of a mentally unstable drug addict.

Then there is the rebellion itself. I was expecting carnage, war, suffering, and terror seen through the eyes of our previous heroine (Katniss) and hero (Peeta). Instead we suffer through ad campaigns and one unnecessary adventure that doesn't occur until the last portion of the book, and even that is unsatisfying with all its useless deaths (Finnick and Primm). Frankly, Finnick was the best part of MockingJay and I couldn't even mourn him properly as his face time was so minimal and his death so swift. But back on point, what was the purpose for Katniss's man killing mission? Is she really so daft that she can't see the bigger picture? Can't she rise above baser human emotions, and the events that pertain only to her? Can't she at least attempt to be worthy of the responsibility that has befallen her? Can't she at least strive to earn it? And what's most pathetic is that the revenge attempt that cost the lives of Finnick and Primm was all for nothing. Snow lives, until TB takes him. At least that's what I assume happens, it never is very clear on how he died.

But my biggest question is, why does Collins hate Peeta? When she wasn't making him an invalid in books 1 and 2, he shined. Now in book 3 he has forgotten his love for Katniss and has been programmed by the Capital to kill her. What the hell? Why? Why not let him finally prove his worth, achieve his greatness? Why did she have to make him someone's bitch?

This book is a sham. A cop out. And it destroys the integrity of the previous books in the series. The characters fail to develop and even digress into wretched states. The ending is a crap shoot, and that epilogue was bullshit. I'm Team Peeta through and through, but I feel ripped off. Katniss didn't choose him, she resigned herself to him because he was the one who came back for her. There was no declaration on her part, no acceptance or confession of her feelings. Peeta deserved better. We readers earned better.

To those of you reviewers who will scoff at my review, claiming that this book was perfect because it was

"realistic", I say give me a break. This series was never meant to be a war documentary. It is a Young Adult Sceince Fiction book. This book contains mutant animals and insects for Christ's sake. In what reality other than "make believe" does a teenager fuel a rebellion? Millions of girls adore Justin Beiber but he isn't going to become the next president. We didn't wait on pins and needles for realism. That's not why readers devoured The Hunger Games. We fell in love because the plot grabbed a hold of our minds with an enthralling story filled with worthy engaging characters. Sadly, somewhere along the way, Collins lost track of the story she was telling and got off course by deciding to get preachy. I didn't want a victim for a heroine, I wanted a victor.

After two rather epic books, I expected more, these characters were worthy of more. It's terrible what was done to them and to us for having to read it. While reading MockingJayI felt like Katniss, a pawn.

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### **Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says**

#### **WHAT THE FUCK KIND OF AN ENDING IS THAT?! SERIOUSLY, WHAT THE FUCK KIND OF AN ENDING IS THAT?**

Ok, short summary. This is day 3 of my Hunger Games binge after I watched the last movie last Saturday without knowing anything about the books and not having watched any of the movies. First book. Awesome. Second book. Glorious. Third book. FUUUUUUUU \*wails out something that sounds like "fuck you, Peeta!!!!!!"\*

So now I know what a Mockingjay is (and I can probably eat it), I know who Coin is, I know who President Snow is, and I know why Peeta is so thin. And now that we've gotten that over with...

**What the fuck happened to Katniss?!** How did she end up being so admirable and awesome in the first two books and turned into such a sniveling, squishy mess in this one? The answer: Peeta.

What the fuck happened to Peeta? Ok, fine, we know what happened to Peeta, but that doesn't make it any better because he's collateral damage. And Katniss is the one who gets hurt with her stupid obsession of him.

In this book, **Gale** was my favorite. He's the voice of reason. It's war, people have to die in order for there to be peace. And Katniss is like all noooooooo, we have to save ALL THE PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE ONE WHO COULD GET US ALL KILLED. Because I love(d?) him ;\_;

NO!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Fuck your single-mindedness, Katniss. YOU HAD ONE JOB. And it's to save your people, not your boyfriend, fiancé, whatever.

And that ending. That stupid ending. I'm sorry, I know that life doesn't always turn out well, but dammit, Suzanne Collins, you put us through the wringer with the last two books. You made us care about these people, and WE DESERVE A BETTER ENDING THAN THAT.

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## Tina says

SPOILERS AHEAD!!

What. the. f\*\*\*. Words can't begin to express my disappointment. I bought Mockingjay the first day it came out and I was preparing myself for a truly epic novel, one worthy of its predecessors. I loved The Hunger Games; it was fast-paced, thrilling, suspenseful. Catching Fire wasn't as good but it was still enjoyable (I was majorly impressed by the game arena). I wasn't let down by Catching Fire though; I figured it was just a transition novel, build-up to what would undoubtedly be a mindblowing, epic conclusion in Mockingjay.

Maybe I set my expectations too high. I do think Collins is a good writer; she definitely knows how to write and tell a story. But I feel like she lost her way in this book. Or maybe the only thing that made this series so great was the Hunger Games, and now that it's absent, there's nothing to drive the story.

The love triangle wasn't well played out. First of all, I'm getting a bit tired of reading about love triangles -- especially in novels where there's a much greater plot present. But I'll admit, I was on Team Gale throughout the series, because he was strong and resilient and resourceful and caring. There was this attractive manly quality about him and he was so in sync with Katniss, and hot to boot. But towards the end of this novel, I didn't give a flying fart about Katniss's love life and who she ended up with, because everything seemed like such a hopeless, depressing mess that there was no point. I also hated how she kept flip-flopping and toying with both Gale and Peeta (I've been bothered by this since CF). She should make up her mind about who she wants instead of leading them both on! Her fickleness is pretty inconsiderate to these two guys whom she supposedly cares about. And if she can't decide (I can see why, they both have great qualities), then she should give herself some space/time to decide, and in the meantime, don't go kissing or showing romantic affection to either one!

She ended up with Peeta, which would have been fine if it had been executed properly. But even in this aspect of her life, she didn't get to CHOOSE, which is basically the story of her life. She just ended up with Peeta because he was the only one who stuck around. At the end, I found myself wanting her to end up alone, of her OWN choice. Heck, instead of spiraling into bleak depression and continuing life as a puppet, I would have rather seen her die for a noble cause and for doing the right thing. That would have been a more satisfactory ending, and that's saying something because I normally HATE when characters die.

I didn't like that we didn't get to experience the action close-up. As the war unraveled, I felt like Katniss was always on the sidelines, only called in when other people commanded her to. We didn't get to see Katniss kicking butt against her enemies, we got to hear from other characters about events that occurred, or watch them on the TV. It is so mindnumbingly dull to be watching a character watching something, instead of experiencing the action with the character. Everything she did was for show, for a prop or campaign or whatever. It was all so .. fake. Here they are in the middle of a war, people are dying left and right, and all they care about is filming and getting good shots and angles and putting on a pretty face! It felt so staged and it was boring and infuriating to read. The only real action is towards the end when she and her team are going on the assassin mission to kill Snow, and even THAT was originally only for a prop (that went astray).

The last third of the book (the assassin mission) was gorey and bloody, which I didn't mind. It's war after all. But many characters' deaths were so rushed and pointless. Prim's death didn't have the impact that I'm sure

Collins was aiming for; I didn't feel sad when she died, as she's barely in the story as it is, so I didn't get to know her well enough and connect with her beforehand. She was absent for at least 100 pages before her death came out of nowhere, for God's sake, so her death felt like any stranger's death. (Although it seems her death kind of defeated the point of sparing her from the Hunger Games.) What DID kill me was Finnick's death. Finnick was one of the characters I loved most in this series, and call me petty, but I can't forgive Collins for killing him off after he'd been through so much and finally got to marry the love of his life. It wasn't even a death of purpose. He got eaten by mutts in a sewer, along with half their assassin team. It annoyed me so much because their deaths felt so UNNECESSARY, like they were just a way for Collins to emphasize that "this is a DEATHLY SERIOUS, VERY BLOODY BOOK!" It felt like she was just randomly and meaninglessly killing off supporting characters because she couldn't bear to part with her main ones. Deaths are fine when they're important to the plot, but this felt like death for the sake of death.

Okay, now on to the REAL disappointment of this book: Katniss herself. One of the reasons why I loved this series was because of Katniss. She was strong, resourceful, clever and cunning, she had an amazing survival instinct and she knew how to persevere. In Catching Fire, these qualities diminished; she was mainly a pawn, a puppet for others to use for their own objectives. But she still had some semblance of control and she was still Katniss. In Mockingjay, all these traits are scrapped and we get a Katniss-clone who is angsty and bitchy and whiny (wasn't Bella in Twilight bad enough?). Half the book, she's throwing herself pity parties in the closet (literally!). Sure, she definitely has reason to be sad and angry, and her life is full of hardships and tragedies. But I thought that the Katniss from the Hunger Games, the Katniss who had to keep her family alive since the age of 12, would be able to fight through and persevere. I guess I wanted a strong victor, a strong heroine, not a self-pitying victim who can't make her own decisions.

That's another thing that bothered me: throughout the whole book, she had no control over ANYTHING, not even her own life and actions. She was a empty, lifeless pawn, a zombie if you will, who didn't do anything that wasn't directed or commanded by other people. In this novel, I was expecting her to STEP UP, embrace her role as Mockingjay, use her power/influence to get involved in the rebellion, take control of her life, and make a difference in the outcome of her world. I was expecting to see her grow and change and I was excited for her metamorphosis. Instead, we get this weak girl who's shirking all responsibilities, addled on drugs half the time, and lashing out at people the other half. Not only did she not improve herself from the first book (she was kickass in the first book btw), she got WORSE, an empty shadow of her former self. At the beginning, I could understand her confusion, her pain, her reluctance to be the Mockingjay. It'd be weird if she DIDN'T feel this way, if she didn't have that time of indecision and unwillingness. But after, I expected her to be strong and work through it, to face her fears and obstacles and choose to do the right thing, to really fight for justice. The best things in life never come easy; anybody who's done anything has had to overcome obstacles to accomplish their goals. When she decided: "I must be the Mockingjay", my heart soared (cheesy but it did!) and I was rooting for her 100%. When I heard her inspirational words during the propos, the fire behind them, my heart soared because I thought Katniss was back. But as I kept reading, I realized .. even though she verbally accepted her role, her mind still wasn't in it and she wasn't in control of herself. She didn't grow and become stronger, that's what pisses me off.

The post-traumatic stress, the mental breakdowns, the self-pity, the self-loathing, the nearing of insanity .. all of these things are realistic, yes, but a bit tiresome and not very interesting to read when it's all the same and the narrator is drowning herself in it in the face of much greater things to the point where it detracts from the plot. These feelings shouldn't be the main focus throughout the ENTIRE novel. There has to be a turning point when she overcomes all of this and actively decides not to let these obstacles stand in her way. Now, many people will say her breakdown is more true to life, and it's what any normal 17-year-old girl would feel and go through. But, maybe I'm weird here, but for some stories, I don't WANT to read about the average, normal teenager. I want to read about someone who's a bit special, who's different, who displays traits (like

courage, heart, perseverance) greater than the norm and accomplishes more than the "normal, average teen" even during the most difficult of times. Something that, when you close the book, makes you feel like "Wow, they're amazing. Inspirational. I want to be like that." & to be honest, I didn't sign up to read a war documentary or some nonfiction account of how war affects its victims. I came in expecting a break from reality, a fantasy sci-fi young adult novel about a girl who becomes a hero.

In trying to be as realistic as possible, I think Collins chose a pessimistic extreme of "realism" to portray. There are perfectly human people in real life in real circumstances who are able to fight through obstacles and hardships and come out on top without relying on drugs and hiding in closets. They can find more constructive and positive ways to deal with their problems. Sure, it obviously affects them (they're not invincible) but they don't lose themselves the way Katniss does. Those are the kinds of inspirational stories I wanna read when it comes to these kinds of novels, not this "Diary of an Emo Puppet."

This book was also REALLY anti-climactic. Whenever Collins finally gave us an exciting scene, as soon as it got intense, Katniss would get knocked out in the midst of things and we'd wake up to her in the hospital being treated. (MAJOR COP-OUT, in my opinion.) Then, of course, comes the inevitable centuries (that's what it felt like) of us hearing about her in pain and agony. Okay, we get it after reading about it the WHOLE novel! Now can she please pick herself up and make herself useful?

Katniss doesn't deserve the title "girl who was on fire" and to be the main character in such an epic setting and story. Sure, she can be on fire, but only when someone sets her on fire or directs her to be on fire, not of her own doing. She was soulless and indifferent and cared about herself and her own feelings more than anyone else's (seeing as how she spends most of the novel grieving for herself and almost never for anyone else) .. if the main character, the narrator, doesn't care about anything and has no passion, why should we? What's the point when the main character whose eyes we're seeing through has no heart and no passion? And what happened to the selfless girl who willingly sacrificed her life to save her sister?

The things I did like. I liked that Katniss had 2 seconds of mental clarity and shot Coin instead of Snow (the only time in the book when she was truly thinking clearly and acting of her own accord). I wonder if I'm giving her too much credit though; judging from her selfish one-track mind in this book, I fear that she did this only because Coin killed Prim, not because she saw the bigger picture. Worse yet, I fear this may just have been a result of Snow's manipulation, not her own decision. I also feel the significance and bravery of this smart moment was rendered meaningless by her immediate cowardly reaction: instead of having conviction in her action and facing the consequences, she scrambled frantically to find the most painless and quickest way to kill herself. She never once in the book acknowledges all she has to live for and all the positive things she still has in her life. When a character's will to survive is absent through a whole novel, I as a reader have no desire for them to live either; grant their wish already! But to continue on .. I liked learning about more of the characters in depth: Gale (who I grew to love even more in this book), Finnick, Annie, Boggs, Johanna, etc. I liked the ending passages (fitting and beautifully haunting) and I liked the songs (The Hanging Tree and the meadow one). There are probably some other things that I'll update this review with once disappointment and frustration are no longer clouding my brain.

I wouldn't have minded so much if it had been a page-turner that was exciting to read, but trying to finish this book felt like a chore. When reading for enjoyment starts feeling like a chore, that's the ultimate sign that I dislike the book. 90% of the book, Katniss was wandering aimlessly through hallways, drugged out on morphling, hiding in a closet, or lying in a hospital bed. I kept waiting, I was so sure it would happen any minute, for the story-changing moment when Katniss would pick herself up and say "Enough is enough." I kept waiting for the moment when the winds would change and she would decide with conviction to actively work through her problems -- but to my shock, that moment never came. This book seriously dragged and

dragged and dragged, and just got slower and slower until everyone started dropping dead towards the last quarter of the book. The Hunger Games, I couldn't put it down; for this, I dreaded picking it up to finish it. I did tons of things in between reading this book (doing my nails, watching TV, taking a walk, etc) because I couldn't read it in one sitting without wanting to gouge my eyes out. It was the same reoccurring theme: Katniss was manipulated and controlled by everyone around her and she didn't think or do anything of her own will. It got old.

I read all this build-up and didn't get rewarded for it. And even though the rebels triumphed, I didn't feel anything for them, not relief, not happiness, just nothing. I was just detached. And none of it was thanks to Katniss: her only role in the Capitol's defeat was watching Prim die, getting burned, and waking up in a hospital, where we're TOLD instead of SHOWN how the Capitol fell (all while she was unconscious, an occurrence that's way too common in this book).

Again, anti-climactic! During the scene when it really mattered!

I understand the message Collins is trying to convey and I agree with it: that war is awful and no one truly wins. And good and bad are not clearly defined black and white. (It got too preachy at certain points though, didn't it?) And I understand that not all books are unicorns-and-ponies happy endings, and that this series has always been intense and dark and a bit bleak. But that only works when there's an underlying message of hope and of optimism. I felt it in the 1st books, but this ending was devoid of all hope and happiness. Yes, humans are disgusting creatures who hurt and kill one another, who do horrible things because of greed and selfishness and just pure malice. But humans are also capable of love and compassion and kindness, and I wish she'd incorporated a bit of that into the story as well so there'd be a more hopeful ending. Even in real life, no matter how bad things may be, there is always hope. Isn't that the kind of message you really want young people to be left with? Instead of pessimistic doom and "give up on mankind"? I finished the book feeling hopeless and lost and depressed, and not in that deep, profound way where it motivates me to get up off my ass and do something to make a difference.

Gosh, at least Harry was his own person and got to face Voldemort in the end. What did Katniss get to do except be an empty canvas for them to paint and feed lines to?

Though I guess since I'm feeling so passionately about all of this, it wasn't a worthless read. It was just very, VERY disappointing.

Edit:

I just re-read this review a month or so after I wrote it and I sincerely apologize for my sloppy writing and overindulgence in run-on sentences! I was in a rush to unleash all my feelings after finishing the book so I wouldn't forget anything. I hope this review was understandable and enjoyable anyway :)

That's the end of the review and you can stop here but I wanted to add on .. and I'm thinking those who grew up with Harry Potter like I did can relate:

So I decided to re-read Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows to prepare myself for the upcoming movie, and to get the bitter taste of Mockingjay out of my mouth, and here's a passage towards the end where Harry's character really touched me and left me in awe:

"Because," said Harry, "sometimes you've got to think about more than your own safety! Sometimes you've got to think about the greater good! This is war!"

"You're seventeen, boy!"

"I'm of age, and I'm going to keep fighting even if you've given up!"

a few sentences later .. "I'm going to keep going until I succeed -- or I die. Don't think I don't know how this might end. I've known it for years."

Reading it again makes me all emotional and teary all over again, from Dobby's heartfelt burial to Harry's courageous walk to his death in the forest, knowing fully well what awaits him and yet willing to sacrifice himself for others and for a better world ...all the while, struggling with his fears and the temptation to run away .. and I swear, tears of pride and joy sprang from my eyes and exhilaration shot through my veins when Harry, the boy we grew up with, stepped up as a man and faced his enemy with confidence, strength, wisdom.

Whatever faults the last HP book may have, I just have to say: Thank you, Harry, for giving me hope again and proving there are still admirable heroes in young literature.

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### **Kaela says**

Mockingjay, the final book in Suzanne Collin's Hunger Games Trilogy. For a year, I had been anxiously waiting to read the about the adventures of the rebels, the hopefully happy ending. How wrong was I. There is an ending - but it is not as happy as most expected it to be. The rebels fought, they won. But in a sense, Collin's shows us that when violence is used to such extremes, no one wins; yes, a winner is declared - but the sadness and loss of both sides proves that no one really wins in war. While reading this book, I felt almost as depressed as a sober Haymitch.

There is a lot of death throughout the book (I sobbed at Finnick's). However, even though there is so much death in this book, most of it comes to new characters; the leader of district 13, Coin; Bogg, one of Katniss's bodyguards; mostly new or unknown characters that pass on. But a lot of the death-related sadness in the book comes not from individual characters, but more from Katniss's vivid description of the mass homicide that they are left with at the end of the war. The group of children murdered on President Snow's doorstep - Prim included. The workers trapped in the Nut, a mountain in district two. The hospital burned down in district eight. That, more than anything, sets such a depressing tone.

In my opinion, however, it wasn't death that made such a sad air around the book. Some of the tortures make it worse. Peeta's hijacking, Finnick's molestation, Johanna's physical pain. And to top the list, Katniss - expected to be the rock strong Mockingjay when all of this happens around her. All this pain that she goes through, and so much more, should make her deserve a happy life afterwards. However, instead of in the company of her surviving friends and family, she finds herself alone, in a burned-down district, sitting by the fire in her Victor's house. That, more than anything, saddens the reader. When Katniss deserves someone with her, to make her feel less alone, the only person to console her is herself. Yes, in the end she and Peeta end up together. But during the book, she is always alone.

Even though this book is a far departure from the first two books, I believe that Suzanne saved her own series. She, like Cinna, made sure that no one would forget the 'girl on fire'. When so many books have slightly bittersweet endings, this book is much heavier on the bitter, distinguishing itself from so many others. There is no Disney ending to the Hunger Games, and I believe that if there was one than it would ruin the message of the series.

Suzanne Collins created her third bittersweet masterpiece, completing one of the most different and best trilogies in YA Fiction today.

\*\*note\*\* its beautiful writing, too. suzanne collins has a gorgeous voice.

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## **Bookdragon Sean says**

Here's seven reasons why this trilogy sucks:

### **1. Katniss has the personality of a vegetable**

### **2. Peeta is a needy little baker boy**

I'll never get over how the author can justify his camouflage techniques born as a result from his cake decorating experience.....

### **3. The world is completely unacceptable and unbelievable.**

No collective nation would be so morally depraved as to watch the murder of children for entertainment; I cannot accept this idea.

### **4. This book did not make me think, as everything is on the surface.**

There is nothing beyond the story; it is basic and thrown in your face.

### **5. The writing is atrocious.**

### **6. Collins self-plagiarises herself in the second book.**

Peeta: We must survive these games.

Katniss: Hang on a minute. Didn't we do this exact same thing before?

Peeta: It doesn't matter. The readers will love it.

Katniss: Ok. I forgot. I'm so stupid. I can only think in simple sentences. We must win. I like to shoot arrows.

Peeta: Yes. We must live. I shall use my cake decorating skill to our advantage!

Katniss: Ok.

## **7. The whole series is a combination of cheap thrills in which the last book is a complete mess.**

I hate this series so much; I will never understand its popularity. It is just terrible on every level. I've included links to my reviews of the first two books, as they explain my summary here. I honestly couldn't be bothered to write a full review of this; it didn't deserve it. It was such a mess.

### The Hunger Games

1. *The Hunger Games*- A transparent one star
2. *Catching Fire*- A cheap one star
3. *Mockingjay*- A terrible one star

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### **Michelle says**

i NEVER thought i'd ever rate this book below a 5...but here i am....and the only reason i gave it a three even is because the first two books of the hunger games were just SO GOOD they brought this one up...by three stars. honestly, i've waited so long for mockingjay to come out. i practically peed my pants on august 24th and now that i've finally finished the book (thanks to a full day of obsessive reading-meals not included) all i can feel is...annoyance. annoyance and disappointment. annoyance that katniss let herself be so easily used, didn't really care about anything, and was idle for so much of the book. and disappointment that you never really get any closure with gale, peeta wasn't there for a third of the book, and he "wasn't himself" for almost all of it. but mostly just mad that nothing really happened for large portions of the book. like...katniss seemed kinda...stuck all throughout. i've always loved her because she was a character that didn't break down easily but mental breakdowns seemed like her favorite activity in this book. she spent like a fourth of the book missing peeta but she never actually DID anything about it. and then when he was saved she barely even talked to him let alone tried to help him. okay \*spoiler alert\* one of the only bright spots of this book is finding out about finnick's past. i was definitely surprised by all he had to say. it made me like him even more. i can honestly say he was the only character that didn't annoy me once in mockingjay...AND THEN HE DIED. i am SO MAD that finnick and cinna's death were pretty much considered inconsequential. like yeah, katniss was sad, but neither of them got like a dramatic tragical death. it was just "yeah. they died. it sucks." and that really bummed me out cause i LOVED them both. i thought finnick's death was three times as devastating as prim's, mostly because i feel like we never got to know prim well enough to really mourn her death. but for finnick i had to go back and reread the page several times before i could actually accept that he had died. and even then i hoped he would magically pop to life again. and not a single tear shed for him from katniss? NOT. OKAY. even though this was the book where the most characters died, it was also

the book where i didn't cry once reading it. mostly because katniss didn't seem to really even care about anything which sort of killed my sympathy and sparked annoyance instead. and yeahh...so back to the whole non-closure thing with gale? it was just so...anticlimactic and...lacking. i've been a peeta supporter since the first chapter of the first book and even i hated how katniss and gale ended. i don't know. i just think that maybe i was expecting this last book to follow basically the same format as the hunger games and catching fire, and i'm just ridiculously (like seriously to the point where it's pathetic) disappointed that it took such a different turn. ...and now that i know the entire series is over so that's the only ending i'm gonna get....:( katniss's shining moment appeared near the end though. when she decided to shoot coin instead of president snow. it almost brought back the old hunger-games-and-catching-fire-rational-and-strong katniss. almost. but then she had to go and try to get herself addicted to morphine in a suicide attempt. bleh. i always knew this was a somewhat dark series, but this book was just. so. bleak. reading it was pretty much equivalent to cutting my wrists. perhaps no amount of writing could ever have helped suzanne collins live up to my sky high expectations of this book but still....

the book could have been better. a lot. better.

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### **Mike (the Paladin) says**

Below is my original review. I'm leaving it as it's still essentially how I feel still. I have however decided that the overall story of the book rates a higher rating than I originally gave (you'll see below). The biggest problem for me was that Katniss seemed to grow some throughout the first and the second book, yet slid back and forth/up and down throughout this. I just didn't think it was still Katniss in some ways.

To each of course and I'd say try it yourself and see how you feel/what you think.

Some spoilers in review as I do discuss some things about the conclusion of the book.

\*\*\*\*\* Spoilers in Review below \*\*\*\*\*

(view spoiler)

I found this an unsatisfying book and conclusion to what had been up to now a pretty good trilogy and if my children were still young I'd definitely discuss this one with them to see what they took away from it. Not my cup of tea, and puts my retention of the other two in my collection in question...I regret the money spent on this book and the time invested in it, a bad sign. The first book is a very good read, the second is pretty good,

but this, the end volume is very, very weak. My opinion of course.

Update: Sadly this volume ruined the entire set for me. I sold all 3.

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### **Annalisa says**

3.5 stars

Well, hmmm. I'm not sure how to react to Mockingjay. I didn't love it and I'm not sure it satisfied me, but it was a disturbing read that will stick with me. Sadly, I can't say that I'll be recommending the series as fervently as I did after reading The Hunger Games. Not that the series isn't good, but I'm not longer sure it's for the masses of YA readers.

Like Catching Fire, Mockingjay took awhile for me to get into. When the pages turned into the triple digits and I wasn't hooked, I got worried it wouldn't be epic. And maybe that's problem: I expected this to match The Hunger Games when I don't think anything can. Like Catching Fire, the stakes are upped, the gruesomeness of war more real, and the intensity more fierce. And in the end, that was my biggest problem. In my opinion, this crossed the line with violence into shock value for the sake of shock value. Yes, it's meant to be thought-provoking and show the price of war to humanity, but at the peak of all this violence, I pulled out of the story. It wasn't President Snow or President Coin (I hated that name) torturing Katniss; it was Collins. I could see the questions running through her head: "What is the worst thing I could do to Katniss? What will break her the most?"

In war, the casualties fall randomly, if heavily, but this was all targeted at Katniss. The death that should have hurt most hardly fazed me (view spoiler); at that point, I had already shut down in a story that was working too hard to manipulate my emotions. It was (view spoiler) killed me (no pun intended), and it disappeared like a whisper. It seemed like Collins picked the only character she made us care about in this book on purpose. It should have felt natural to the progression of the story, but it didn't. (view spoiler) Plus, the desensitization was, in my opinion, too much. There is a lot of bleakness in the other books in the series, but it is balanced with a humanity and hope that I think is crucial in YA fiction.

My review of Hunger Games states that Collins took an unbelievable story and made it believable. Here, she took the believable violence and cruelty of war and made it a little unbelievable for me. I struggled to find motivation from President Snow targeting children, to understand why the citizens of the capital continued to believe him, to accept that these villains could be this sadistically evil, to believe that this much could go wrong for one person, to champion Collin's bleak take on humanity. Not that this story is any more unbelievable than The Hunger Games, but Collins delivered this one with such a numb, detached string of events that relied on violence instead of characters to deliver her message. Even more important than hope in YA is a strong character you would follow anywhere. I didn't want to follow Katniss in this story.

She shut down in the end, but really she'd been shutting down the entire book. After the fiery character of the first two books, it was hard to get nothing from her (especially as a first-person POV) and still feel vested in the outcome of her story. Her cold, detached comments to (view spoiler) in particular bothered me, especially after everything he sacrificed for her. I had to keep reminding myself of all the horror she'd been through because although her detachment realistic, it bothered me. I couldn't remember why anyone wanted a self-absorbed teenager as the Mockingjay. I didn't need Katniss to lead the revolution, but I wanted something from her: a peek into her emotions/insights, a proactive motion, anything that pushed her

character forward. Without any character development (from any of the characters), the story relied too heavily on action without connecting the pieces, developing those story lines, or making me care about the characters involved. I would have almost rather heard the story from a third party watching a broken Mockingjay than the emptiness with which Katniss tells her story. What I really wanted is Katniss back. I know I can't have her, but if I had to lose her, I wanted to feel heartbreak instead of nothing.

About the love triangle... (view spoiler)

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I guess what depresses me most about this book is that I expected so much more from it. I know Collins is capable of power. In the end, I was too numb to feel its power, to even cry, to feel anything at all. I left a fantastic series with a major blank.