Mel Kennard, "Entry on: Catching Fire (The Hunger Games, 2) by Suzanne Collins", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Hanna Paulouskaya. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1505. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Suzanne Collins

# Catching Fire (The Hunger Games, 2)

*United States (2009)*

TAGS: Aphrodite Artemis Athena Diana Heracles Hercules Minerva Phoenix (Bird) Venus






*We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.*

| General information | |
|---|---|
| *Title of the work* | Catching Fire (The Hunger Games, 2) |
| *Country of the First Edition* | United States of America |
| *Country/countries of popularity* | USA, UK, Australia, worldwide |
| *Original Language* | English |
| *First Edition Date* | 2009 |
| *First Edition Details* | Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire*. New York: Scholastic US, 2009, 448 pp. |
| *ISBN* | 9781407109367 |
| *Official Website* | Suzannecollinsbooks.com (acessed: September 1, 2022) |
| *Genre* | Action and adventure fiction, Dystopian fiction, Novels |
| *Target Audience* | Young adults |
| *Author of the Entry* | Mel Kennard, University of New England, mkennard@myune.edu.au |
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## Creators



**Suzanne Collins , b. 1962**
**(Author)**

Suzanne Collins was born in Connecticut in 1962. A theatre arts major at the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham, she graduated in 1980, before studying at the Indiana University Bloomington, where she double majored in theatre and telecommunications, graduating in 1985. She then went on to complete a Master of Fine Arts in dramatic writing at the New York University Tisch School of the Fine Arts, where she graduated in 1989. Having completed extensive studies, Collins then went on to write for many children's television shows, both live-action and animated. She began writing children's novels during this period, with her first book, *Gregor the Overlander* (2003, Scholastic US), becoming a New York Times Bestseller. In 2008, *The Hunger Games*, the first book in a trilogy by Collins, was released to great success and was subsequently adapted into a film version, directed by Gary Ross and released by Lionsgate in 2012. Since then, Collins has published an autobiographical picture book, *Year of the Jungle* (2013) and a prequel novel to *The Hunger Games* trilogy, titled *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* (2020, Scholastic US). Her books have sold over 100 million copies worldwide. Collins currently lives in Connecticut.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: April 30, 2022).

Wikipedia (accessed: April 30, 2022).

Famousauthors.org (accessed: April 30, 2022)

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## Additional information

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| Adaptations | Film Adaptation: *Catching Fire*, Lionsgate, 2013. Directed by Francis Lawrence, starring Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, Liam Hemsworth, Woody Harrelson, Elizabeth Banks, and Donald Sutherland. |
| Translation | As a global best-seller, *Catching Fire* has been translated into many languages, including:<br><br>Albanian: *Vajza e zjarrit*, trans. Taulant Hatia, Tiranë: Uegen, 2010.<br><br>Arabic: □□□□□ □□□□□, trans. Sa'īd Muḥammad al-Ḥasaniyah, Bayrūt: Arab Scientific Publishers, 2011.<br><br>Bosnian: *Lov na vatru*, trans. Maja Kostadinović, Sarajevo: Buybook, 2012.<br><br>Chinese: *Xing Huo Liao Yuan*, [s.l.]: Da Kuai Wen Hua, 2010.<br><br>Croatian: *Plamen*, trans. Mladen Kopjar, Zagreb: Algoritam, 2012.<br><br>French: *L'Embrasement*, trans. Guillaume Fournier, Pocket Jeunesse, 2009.<br><br>German: *Gefährliche Liebe*, trans. Sylke Hachmeister and Peter Klöss, Hamburg: Ötinger, 2010.<br><br>Greek: *Φωτιά* [Fōtiá], trans. Pīnelópī Triadá, Athīna: Platypous Ekdotikī, 2009.<br><br>Hebrew: □□□□□□□, trans. Ya'el Akhmon, Or Yehudah: Kinneret Zamora Bethan - Dvir, 2011.<br><br>Hungarian: *Futótűz*, trans. Totth Benedek, [Budapest]: Agave, 2010.<br><br>Italian: *La Ragazza di Fuoco*, trans. Simona Brogli and Fabio Paracchini, Milano: Mondadori, 2012.<br><br>Korean: *Catching Fire* □□ □□□, trans. Wŏn-yŏl Yi, [South Korea]: Sŏul-si, 2010. |



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Polish: *W pierścieniu ognia*, trans. Piotr Budkiewicz and Małgorzata Hesko-Kołodzińska, Poznań: Harbor Point Media Rodzina, 2009.

Portuguese: *Em chamas*, trans. Alexander D'Elia, Rio de Janeiro: Rocco Jovens Leitores, 2011.

Russian: *И вспыхнет пламя* [I vspyhnet plamia], trans. I□U□. Moiseenko, Moskva: AST, Astrel', 2010.

Serbian: *Lov na vatru*, trans. Maja Kostadinović, Beograd: Alnari, 2010.

Spanish: *En Llamas*, trans. Pilar Ramirez Tello, Barcelona: Editorial Molino, 2010.

Vietnamese: *Bắt lửa*, trans. Phương Huyền, Nhiệt Xích, Hà Nội: Văn học, 2012.

## Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs

*Catching Fire* is the sequel to *The Hunger Games* (2008). It is followed by a third book in the series *Mockingjay* (2010). A separate prequel novel *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* was released in 2020.

## Summary

*Catching Fire* begins six months after the events of *The Hunger Games*. Having survived the Games, Katniss, now seventeen, is living in luxury in the Victor's Village with her mother and younger sister, Prim. The novel begins on the morning of the Victory Tour, with Katniss and Peeta about to visit the other eleven districts and the Capitol of their nation Panem to celebrate their win in the Games. Before they leave, President Snow visits Katniss at home and warns her that her actions in the Games have been seen as an act of rebellion, sparking discord in the Districts. He expects Katniss to quash this discord while on tour by again playing the role of love-stricken girl.

Katniss and Peeta leave on the tour with their mentor Haymitch and Capitol guide Effie. Although their relationship has been frosty since the Games, Katniss and Peeta form a real friendship while on the tour, helping each other through their shared trauma from the Games. Peeta shows Katniss the pictures he has painted of the Games, while



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Katniss opens up to him about the nightmares she experiences. Tension in the districts is high and, in an attempt to distract the residents from potential rebellion, Peeta proposes to Katniss. Katniss and Peeta return home, but Katniss realises that the charade of loving Peeta is no longer just for the tour but will now be for her whole life.

As Katniss resumes her life in District Twelve after the tour, she and Gale fight about leaving. But when Katniss meets two women from District Eight, and learns of the uprising there, she and Gale decide to stay in the hopes that the same thing might be possible in their own district. A new head Peacekeeper named Romulus Thread arrives in District Twelve and the relative freedom the District Twelve residents had is removed, along with any hopes of an uprising.

While Katniss makes preparations for her wedding to Peeta, it is announced that the upcoming 75th Hunger Games will draw its Tributes from the existing pool of Victors. This means that Katniss and Peeta are again District Twelve's Tributes. They travel to the Capitol and meet the other Tributes, many of whom show signs of being traumatised from their first Games: some are alcoholics, others are addicted to a drug called morphling. Some Tributes, like District Four's Finnick and District Seven's Johanna, are young, but many, such as stroke survivor Mags, also from District Four, are much older. The Tributes bond more than in previous Games, eating and training together. In spite of this, Katniss is reluctant to form an alliance with any of them, despite Haymitch's insistence. The night before the Games begin, the Tributes use their interviews to express their own disdain at being sent back in the Arena, drawing on the Capitol audience's feelings of closeness and familiarity towards them. Katniss appears in her wedding dress, which, when she spins around, burns away, revealing a second, black, feathered dress, much like a Mockingjay, the bird on her pin from the first Games, which has become a popular symbol in the Capitol, and an image of rebellion in the districts.

The already emotional audience is thrown into disarray when Peeta lies and tells them that he and Katniss got married, and that Katniss is pregnant. The interviews end abruptly. The following day, Katniss is transported into the Arena, but before entering, she sees her stylist, Cinna, responsible for her rebellious dress, arrested and beaten up.

Inside the Arena, which comprises a jungle, beach and ocean, Katniss and Peeta soon form an alliance with Finnick, Johanna, and District



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Three's Tributes, Wiress and Beetee. Other Tributes, like Mags and a morphling addict from District Six, show their willingness to sacrifice themselves for Katniss and Peeta, which confuses Katniss. The Arena is shaped like a giant clock, with different traps in each of its twelve segments, like deadly gas, muttation monkeys and Jabberjay birds, and a giant lightning bolt.

The allied Tributes decide to weaponize the lightning, using some wire Beetee found in the Cornucopia, by running it from the tree where the lightning bolt strikes down to the beach, which will be wet from another trap, a giant tidal wave. As Katniss and Johanna are running the wire down, it snaps. When this happens, Johanna attacks Katniss, cutting her arm. Katniss escapes and heads back to the others, desperate to find Peeta. She only finds Beetee, who is trying to stab the wire into the forcefield around the Arena with a knife. Realising what he is trying to do, Katniss takes the wire from him and winds it around an arrow, which she shoots into the forcefield just as the lightning strikes. This causes the forcefield to be destroyed.

Katniss is knocked unconscious and when she wakes she is in a hovercraft. She, Finnick and Beetee were rescued from the Arena when Katniss destroyed the forcefield, but Peeta and Johanna have been captured by the Capitol. Katniss learns that the districts have risen up against the Capitol, that the rebellion is in full swing and that the districts and Capitol are at war. She also learns that she has become the symbol of this rebellion, its "Mockingjay". Many of the Tributes in the Arena were in on this plan, which is why Johanna attacked Katniss, to cut her tracker out, and why others were willing to die: they weren't dying for Katniss, but rather for the rebellion and her place in it. Feeling betrayed, as neither she nor Peeta were told about any of this, Katniss retreats, refusing to eat or drink. Gale visits Katniss and she asks if they are returning to District Twelve. Gale replies that there no longer is a District Twelve, on the night Katniss was rescued from the Arena, District Twelve was fire-bombed and destroyed. With this final revelation, *Catching Fire* ends.

## Analysis

Similarly to *The Hunger Games*, the first novel in Collins' trilogy, *Catching Fire* forms part of a large range of dystopic young adult novels that were released in the 2000s and early 2010s. Much like the first book in the series, *Catching Fire* also draws upon classical motifs throughout its narrative.



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In *Catching Fire* protagonist Katniss retains her role as an Artemis/Diana figure. Much like in *The Hunger Games*, Katniss is presented as feeling most comfortable and most herself when she is outdoors in nature, hunting with a bow and arrow. In fact, her comfort within this role is greatly contrasted throughout the series with her new role as Victor and she often flees to the woods outside District Twelve when she wishes to regain a semblance of her previous self. Similarly, the performative role that Katniss plays as an Aphrodite/Venus figure is expanded upon throughout the events of *Catching Fire*. In order to appease the rebelling districts, as well as ruthless President Snow, Katniss must act as a romantic figure, emphasising her love for Peeta and how it led to her actions in the Games. However, when the Quarter Quell is announced, this Aphrodite/Venus role soon becomes a way for Katniss to rebel, as she appears in her wedding dress at her interview before the Games before it bursts into flames and reveals a Mockingjay dress beneath it. Peeta, too, is shown as capitalising on Katniss' role as a romantic figure: he announces that he and Katniss have married and reveals her pregnancy. Although Peeta's motives for this are unclear, whether he is attempting to protect Katniss or is engaging in his own acts of rebellion is not specified, he is nonetheless shown as using his and Katniss' romance, and particularly her role as an object of desire, to further his own means.

In appearing in her wedding dress and performing a romantic storyline with Peeta, Katniss temporarily becomes an Aphrodite/Venus figure. This prefigures her later transformation into an Athena/Minerva figure in the third volume of the series. Athena, in particular, was known as being a goddess of war, and it is this role that Katniss will eventually assume in the series. In *Catching Fire*, Collins hints at this metamorphosis through the burning and transformation of Katniss' wedding dress, from a pearl-laden object of beauty to a feathered, black dress. This transformation is reminiscent of the figure of the phoenix, which appears not only in Ancient Egyptian mythology, but also generally in Classical antiquity. In *Catching Fire*, Katniss' transformation into an Athena/Minerva figure is marked through the burning of her dress and the metaphorical regeneration and reinvention that is evoked by it.

However, it is not only Katniss who bears similarity to the gods and goddesses of the classics in *Catching Fire*, but also many of the other Tributes. Both of District Four's Tributes, Finnick and Mags, are positioned as Poseidon/Neptune and Amphitrite/Salacia figures;



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Finnick's weapon of choice is a trident and he is skilled at weaving nets, while Mags can fashion a fishhook from almost anything. Even Peeta takes on the role of a god-like figure, as he relies on his artistic ability to help him live with the trauma he experienced in the first Games, relating him to gods of art such as Hephaestus and Vulcan. Haymitch's own Games are touched upon in the novel and his weaponizing the Capitol's forcefield in the Arena so that he can win, as well as the consequences he faces for this seeming act of rebellion, places him in the position of trickster god Prometheus, who also used the gods own creations against them and suffered deeply for it.

Although the different Tributes are shown as possessing god-like qualities, they nonetheless remain powerless in the face of the Capitol in *Catching Fire*. Sent back into the Arena, they are once again shown to be at the whim, and mercy, of people higher than they are, people like President Snow and the Gamemakers. Indeed, the Arena can be seen to function as a kind of Underworld, a place where the Tributes, once Victors, have been sent to in order to quash any idea of rebellion from the Districts at large. In fact, the clock-like Arena with its twelve segments, each with their own unique trap, can be seen to return the Tributes to the status of humans, or at least demi-gods, powerless in the face of stronger, more powerful figures. Much like Hercules faced twelve labours, the Tributes face twelve trapped areas/segments of the Arena. Specifically, two segments of the Arena can be seen as corresponding to two of the twelve labours faced by Hercules. The first is the segment with the monkey muttations, which can be read as parallels to the Nemean Lion, with their orange fur and their fangs. Similarly, the Jabberjays seen in another segment of the Arena can be likened to the Stymphalian Birds that Hercules faced. Consequently, although the Arena reduces the Victor Tributes back to the status of mortal, it can also be read as allowing them to attain the status of hero, as they face and overcome the twelve trapped segments of the Arena, much as the demi-god Hercules faced the twelve labours.

Ultimately, *Catching Fire* is a novel about trauma. The Victor Tributes, although powerful in their own right, are all shown as being traumatised in some way. Promethean figure Haymitch, who won his Games by using the Capitol's tools against them, is presented as a surly alcoholic who has lost everything. Fierce, axe-wielding Johanna runs headfirst into the Jabberjays as they take on the voices of the Tributes' loved ones, stating "There's no one left I love" (p. 418). Although Peeta uses art and painting to work through his own trauma, he nevertheless still suffers from the after-effects of his experiences.



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| | And Katniss, the novel's protagonist, who performs many roles, suffers from nightmares, from guilt and from a deep, but realistic, fear that she will never be safe. Thus, *Catching Fire* draws upon classical and mythological imagery not to place its characters in one certain role, but rather to extend its exploration of power, imperialism, to show that those who fight unfair societal power structures often experience negative consequences, such as trauma, from it, and to emphasise for its young readers that this does not render such a fight futile. |
| Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts | Aphrodite Artemis Athena Diana Heracles Hercules Minerva Phoenix (Bird) Venus |
| Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture | Friendship Romance Utopia and dystopia Violence |
| Further Reading | Hanson, Kathryn Strong, "The Metamorphosis of Katniss Everdeen: The Hunger Games, Myth, and Femininity", *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 40.2 (2015): 161–178.<br><br>Moffat, Kirstine and Melody May, "'Death from All Sides': Spectacle, Morality, and Trauma in Suzanne Collins' The Hunger Games Trilogy", *Mortality* 26.4 (2021): 439–455.<br><br>Ruthven, Andrea, "The Contemporary Postfeminist Dystopia: Disruptions and Hopeful Gestures in Suzanne Collins' The Hunger Games", *Feminist Review* 116 (2017): 47–62. |



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