

The Hunger Games

In the nation of Panem, established in the remains of North America after an apocalyptic event, the wealthy Capitol exploits the twelve surrounding districts for their natural resources and labor. As punishment for a past failed rebellion against the Capitol, which resulted in the obliteration of District 13, one boy and one girl between the ages of 12 and 18 from each of the remaining districts are selected by an annual lottery to participate in the Hunger Games, a contest in which the "tributes" must fight to the death in an outdoor arena until only one remains.

16-year-old Katniss Everdeen from District 12, a coal-rich region, volunteers for the 74th Hunger Games in place of her 12-year-old sister, Primrose. The male tribute is Peeta Mellark, a former schoolmate of Katniss who once gave her bread from his family's bakery when her family was starving. In the days leading up to the Games in the Capitol, they are advised by their drunken mentor, Haymitch Abernathy, the sole living District 12 victor of the Games; chaperone Effie Trinket; and various stylists to enhance their public perception to get potential sponsors, who might later send potentially life-saving gifts. Katniss's stylist, Cinna, designs costumes for Katniss and Peeta that set them apart from the tributes when introduced to the public. During their evaluation by the Gamemakers, Katniss gets the highest score among the tributes. Meanwhile, Rue, the petite 12-year-old girl tribute from District 11, follows Katniss and Peeta around during the training sessions. On the day before the games, in a televised interview, Peeta reveals his long-unrequited love for Katniss. Shocked, Katniss believes this is a ploy to gain sponsors, but later accepts this as sincere. Haymitch promotes their image as "star-crossed lovers".

The Games begin, and nearly half the tributes are killed at the start whilst fighting over weapons and supplies in an area in the center of the arena known as the Cornucopia. Katniss disregards Haymitch's earlier advice to flee immediately and nearly dies but uses her well-practiced hunting and survival skills to hide in the woods. Days later, an artificial fire drives Katniss toward the others. She is spotted and chased up a tree by the "Career tributes", tributes who are trained from childhood to compete in the Games, from Districts 1, 2, and 4, and Peeta, who seems to have allied with them. Rue, hiding in a nearby tree, alerts Katniss to a "tracker jacker" nest. Katniss cuts it down, releasing the flying insects, which are genetically modified to track whoever disturbs their nest and have venom that targets the section of their victims' minds that houses fear. Their venom kills two of the Careers and drives the others away, but Katniss is stung and begins hallucinating. Peeta returns, but instead of killing her, tells her to run away. Katniss later allies with Rue, who is fatally wounded by a tribute from District 1 while Katniss destroys the careers' supplies. Katniss murders Rue's killer with an arrow and accompanies Rue as she dies. She spreads flowers over Rue's body to show her defiance against the Capitol. In gratitude, Rue's district sends Katniss a loaf of bread.

A rule change is announced, allowing the tributes from the same district to win as a pair. Katniss finds Peeta (who only allied with the Careers to protect Katniss) camouflaged into a riverbank, having been injured by Cato, one of the Careers. She nurses Peeta back to health as best she

can, but he is still gravely injured. Katniss pretends to be madly in love with Peeta in an attempt to gain gifts from sponsors. When the Gamemakers send a delivery of what each contestant needs most, Katniss risks her life to obtain medicine for Peeta. She is intercepted by Career Tribute Clove, who gloats over Rue's death and tries to kill Katniss, but is killed by Thresh, the male District 11 tribute, who spares Katniss for Rue's sake. The medicine saves Peeta's life.

Thresh is later killed by Cato and another tribute, nicknamed Foxface, dies after consuming toxic berries. Genetically modified wolves are then released into the arena that kill Cato. Once Katniss and Peeta become the last two survivors, the Gamemakers revoke the rule change to force one to kill the other for a dramatic finale. In defiance, Katniss prepares to consume poisonous "nightlock" berries with Peeta. Realizing that they intend to commit suicide so that there will not be a victor for the Games, the Gamemakers declare Katniss and Peeta the victors. Although both of them receive a hero's welcome as a couple, Katniss is warned by Haymitch that the Capitol may take action against her for her defiance. Along the way back to District 12, Peeta is heartbroken to learn that Katniss's actions were part of a calculated ploy to gain sympathy. Katniss, however, is unsure of her own feelings and her future.