About Mockingjay

Katniss has been rescued from the Quarter Quell, along with several of her allies in the Games, but Peeta is now a prisoner of President Snow in the Capitol. As she recovers from her trauma in the arena, Katniss becomes aware that the rebellion has begun in earnest, orchestrated by District 13, the place she once believed was obliterated in the last war. Gale, along with his family and Katniss’s sister and mother, has escaped the destruction of District 12 and all are now settling into a new life in the vast underground installation that comprises District 13.

Katniss is reluctant at first to assume the role planned for her—the face of the rebellion, the Mockingjay. Only after a televised interview showing Peeta in the hands of the Capitol does she understand what she must do, using the costume created for her by Cinna before he was killed. But she is uncomfortable with the orchestrated and controlled handling of her “image” and the militaristic members of the rebellion, especially the calculating leader, Coin. Determined to be the one to assassinate President Snow and to help bring about the downfall of the Capitol, Katniss once again finds herself in an arena—only this one represents a life or death struggle for the entire society. Katniss faces critical choices: Whom should she trust? What should her role be? Do ends justify means? What is right and wrong? What truths must she follow?

Discussion Questions for Mockingjay

1. What is Katniss’s greatest challenge when she returns to see the ruins of her home? What is the meaning of the rose she finds on her dresser? Why does she keep repeating facts about herself?

2. Why does Katniss take the cat Buttercup back to District 13? What role does Buttercup play in the story in later chapters?

3. What is the first reaction Katniss has to the people of District 13? What makes her say, “In some ways District 13 is even more controlling than the Capitol”?

4. What influences her decision to become the Mockingjay? Why does Katniss have to ask for conditions once she agrees to take on the role of Mockingjay?

5. Discuss the feelings between Katniss and Coin. Why do they distrust each other from the beginning? How does Coin treat the conditions that Katniss demands for being the Mockingjay? Is Katniss really a threat to Coin’s power?

6. Compare the reactions of Katniss and Gale to the imprisonment and treatment of Katniss’s prep team, Venia, Octavia, and Flavius. How does this reflect on both of them? What is the difference between the prep team and the filming crew—Cressida, Mesalla, Castor, and Pollux—who are also from the Capitol?

7. What was necessary for Katniss to create a truly effective “propo” for the rebellion? Why didn’t the first idea work? Why does Haymitch say, “That is how a revolution dies”? After the taping in District 8, what does Katniss mean when she says, “I have a kind of power I never knew I possessed”?
8. Discuss the role of television “propaganda” in today’s society and the techniques that are used to influence our thinking. How do these techniques compare to those used by the Capitol and the rebels in *Mockingjay*?

9. Why did Plutarch cover up Katniss and Gale’s insubordination in District 8 during the taping? What is the effect of the “propo” on the rebellion in other districts? Why are the “propos” so vital to the rebellion? What effect do Katniss and the Mockingjay symbolism have on those fighting against the Capitol and those in the Capitol?

10. Discuss the role of music in this book. What is the significance of the “Hanging Tree” song? How many ways does the song play a part in the story? How does it connect Katniss and Peeta to their past and their future? Research the song “Strange Fruit” sung by Billie Holiday and discuss its similarities and differences to Katniss’s song.

11. Discuss the changing nature of the relationship between Katniss and Gale. What does Gale say is the “only way I get your attention”? Did Katniss ever love Gale the way he wants her to love him? Does he truly love her?

12. Discuss the changing nature of Prim’s role in the story, as she grows older. Identify times when Prim helps Katniss when no one else can.

13. Why do the rebels decide to rescue Peeta? Discuss the effects of the “hijacking” of Peeta’s brain. Discuss Katniss’s comment, “It’s only now that he’s been corrupted that I can fully appreciate the real Peeta.” What is the significance of the pearl she keeps?

14. Why are Finnick and Johanna important to Katniss? Discuss her relationship to each of them and how they help her prepare for the final fight. What is the effect of Finnick’s “propo” about his treatment by President Snow?

15. When Katniss learns of the work Gale is doing with Beetee, using the psychology of trapping as much as the mechanics, she says to Gale, “Seems to be crossing some kind of line.” Gale’s reply is that they are “following the same rule book President Snow used.” Do the ends in this battle justify the means, as Gale seems to imply?

16. Why is it so hard for Katniss to accept Gale’s idea for trapping the workers inside the Nut (“I can’t condemn someone to the death he’s suggesting”)? What does she mean when she says to the wounded man in the square, “I’m tired of being a piece in their Games”? How many ways does the invasion of the Capitol remind Katniss of the Games?

17. Discuss Katniss’s feelings of guilt and insecurity when confronting Peeta. What makes her say, “Finally, he can see me for who I really am. Violent. Distrustful. Manipulative. Deadly”? What makes her think the worst of herself?

18. What are Coin’s motives in ordering Peeta to join Katniss’s squad in the Capitol? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having him on the squad? When Boggs transfers the holo to Katniss, why does he say, “Don’t trust them”? Whom does he mean?

19. Do you believe it was the rebels who killed the children with the exploding parachutes? If so, how does that make you feel about whether this was justified as a means of winning the war?

20. Why does Paylor allow Katniss to enter the rooms where Snow is being held? Does she know that Snow will reveal to Katniss the role of the rebels in Prim’s death? Did Snow tell Katniss the truth?

21. Why did Katniss vote for another Hunger Games? To save the lives of more people? Or did she secretly anticipate sabotaging the plan?

22. Why does Katniss assassinate Coin? Does she do it to avenge Prim, or because she believes it is for the greater good of the country, or both? How does Katniss escape retribution for Coin’s death?

23. Gale tells Peeta, when they are hiding out in the Capitol, that Katniss will pick whichever one of them she can’t survive without. In the end, why is that one Peeta and not Gale?