



»»BOOK REVIEW

How to catch a 'Mockingjay'

BY LOVELYN M. QUINTOS
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The trilogy

From what used to be North America lies the apocalyptic country of Panem, a dictatorship consisted of a governing Capitol and the Twelve Districts. A boy and a girl are picked from each district to join *Hunger Games*, an annual reality show where tributes fight for their lives, as the Capitol's reminder of its power over the districts.

Katniss Everdeen has survived her first *Hunger Games* together with Peeta Mellark but the Capitol was not convinced with the pair's star-crossed lovers tactic. They were again dragged to the Quarter Quell joining previous victors of the games, unaware of their roles in a budding rebellion against the Capitol.

Katniss, the girl on fire, is the "Mockingjay," symbol of rebellion. But will Katniss finally realize her role? Will the "Mockingjay" set her wings on fire and find her voice?

The net

After devouring the book up until four in the morning, I felt very enervated and hopeful all the same, wishing that I was not really holding the last book, my final access to the dystopian country of Panem. I couldn't beg for the author to have it rewritten but she's just as powerful that even up to now, I couldn't forgive her for the book's effect on my system. (Still couldn't get over Finnick!)

Suzanne Collins' power over words is unquestionable. Most of the time, she paints a vivid description of both emotions and scenarios only to deconstruct it at utmost effectiveness. Almost every chapter explodes into a surprising twist of events leading to another ticking time-bomb courtesy of her cliff-hangers. This last book from *The Hunger Games* trilogy is just as engaging and imaginative as the other two, though I still bet on *Catching Fire* as the best.

Don't get me wrong. The book,

as a final offering, is good but every reader who has learned to love Katniss, Peeta, Gale and the other characters will surely find hard time mourning for the sacrifices to secure a painful yet satisfying ending.

What worked best for *Mockingjay* is that it somehow erased the thin line which separates sci-fi from realistic fiction. Sci-fi novels usually aim to startle and terrify the reader but through *Mockingjay's* labyrinth of a realistic plot, both exhilaration and terror were magnified.

It is not surprising that despite being labelled a children's novel, the trilogy's loyal followers are mostly young adults. Collins wove words which very well depict the grim and gore of a revolution as well as the weaknesses and hopes of both mind and heart.

However, what proved to be challenging to the author and confusing to the reader is the point of view. While the approach had very little effect on limiting the reader from the real score on the first two novels, relaying *Mockingjay* from Katniss' vision had become a brave attempt for Collins and a confusing experience for a reader.

The author remained faithful to the trilogy's general theme but the reality-TV effect got closely diminished in "Mockingjay." Beyond romance, the ways of the revolution were given focus while zooming in to the emotions of a young woman with a major responsibility to fulfil. Readers who revel on literature traversing concepts such as governance and defiance even psychology will find it a worthy investment.

The Hunger Games and *Catching Fire* is a requisite to *Mockingjay*. It is not a stand-alone novel; it owes everything to the forebears but is a worthy way of closing the curtains.

Grab a copy of Suzanne Collins' "Hunger Games," "Catching Fire" and "Mockingjay" exclusively available on National Book Stores.

BY ARBEEN ACUNA

Last of two parts
—Condiments, son?
—What the fuck are you talking about?
—With your father that you are about to drink.

—Condiments with this—
—My bad! Sorry son, I meant 'condolence.' Anyway, let us get to the point and stop all the bollocks, shall we? (*Fucking, fucking sick joke! Very not funny. Plain sick!*)

—What coming of age are you talking about, in your imail the other day, Mr. Ignacio?

—That is splendid mockery, son. I am the Pope, by the way. And you are sold to me by Lenin, your father. You are to take his place as my Templar trainee. Call me that again, and I'll stab your bloody mouth. If anything happened to me, because someone is listening to what we are talking about in here, I would, I tell you, I would hold you and your brothers accountable.

—Okay, Father. Whatever. (*Faggot. What faggoty are you showing, Stalin?*)

—You listen Stalin, and you listen good. Your father died for our cause. The materialist pseudo-socialist government should fall soon. (*Moron! We really are a socialist democratic country now.*)

—Tell me what happened!
—He was abducted by the materialist state for idolatry and fanaticism. That is the only truth that I could and that I would dare tell you at this point.

—What if they take you or someone you knew next?

—For the nth time Stalin, for the nth time! You listen Stalin, and you listen good. Your father died for our cause. The materialist pseudo-socialist government should fall soon. (*Retard! What a sudden change of mood! And, oh, we really are a socialist democratic country now!*)

—They are listening as I am listening, Father. We can not do anything to push pseudo-socialism further to communism. We are another China after all. And this is all we would ever be.

—Preposterous! (*Both of you are.*)

—You are everywhere! They knew you, they know your operations, they send surveillance units. We, assuming I would go with you, can never win against the powerful state. (*Right!*)

—Bloody bollocks, Stalin. Clear your mind! Your young Mao would succeed you soon.

—I can't. I just can't. (*Fag.*)

—You want to eat babies, lad?

Or fetuses? That might make you better? (*What the fuck?*)

—Yes please. A fetus would do. Fresh from the mother's womb.

—Do you want it roasted or fried? (*They can't be serious!*)

—Deep fried please. (*Sick!*)

—O, and let us go find ourselves some demons to worship or some succubi or incubi to wank or fuck with, alrighty? It would make you feel better. (*Fucking bullshit! Sick!*)

—Father, they might find out!

Someone might report our activities. (*That is why I am here.*)

—I bet they would. I sure do.

What the fuck is wrong with these guys, I asked my self as I prepare my nanoph so I could tell her the sickest things she would ever hear in her entire existence. I took time to breathe and compose my self before reporting.

I have new data, Doc, I told her.

THE OURACLE

Just like another déjà vu, I heard neither an affirmation of approval nor grunt of disappointment. I received no response or whatsoever from her.

Something's wrong and I am right about my repeated carelessness, I thought. I groped my coat for the nanophone. It was not there. Perhaps out of the accumulated shock and dread, I sought the air for a chord—but later realized again that the nanoph, my nanoph, was an experimental prototype of grayfang technology. I must have dropped it somewhere. Good thing their headquarters is urbanized—and the floor, bolstered with solid iron.

Something produced the tap, tap, tap, I thought as I heard before. I ignored the sound and bent over to pick my only communication link to her, to Doctor Bleckes. And I saw the familiar horse shoe seemingly landing towards my face. The hoof landed directly on the nanophone. The creature towered over me. It remained unmoved for a long while. I was frozen like a cold blank stare fearing that it might impregnate me, however they might do that with a biomecha-human without an ovary, and eat my baby or have my ash brewed into coffee.

Goddamnit, I shrieked. And the beast spoke, *Greetings, Tom. I think I have met a voyeur like you before.*

ii. The Revelations

What's this fucking mess I've gotten myself into, I repented in silence as I woke up to the maniacal laughter of the cultist leader and his flock. I chose to shut up forever with the thought that *that* was the last word I articulated with my physical mouthpiece. I heard the first and last sermon that I would cherish for my entire eternal existence, though I am uncertain whether I would be conscious or not. :

—Let us begin, shall we? First of all, my sincerest apologies because I have decided to play a British priest's role moments you arrived, so you could have seen lapses in acting. Bad acting. As you can see, I am not that good in this tongue that you use a lot, okay? But that does not mean that you are more clever than me. As situation shows you now.

Here is an outline of special sermon just for you: who your subject is, what he does, what we do, who I am, who your master is, what we would do to you, and what you would do.

Listen with all I have to say, okay? Your target, or "subject," Litic—not Stalin—knew all along that you were following him. And yes, that is pretty obvious that a Temelus—the Temelus named Caucatin—saw you at plaza Marauder near Keiapho Church Ruins.

Litic—or Litik, if you want to use the untainted spelling—is an important figure in our "cult." He could have thrown a lightning bolt at you at Lost Banes, but he refused. He gave you a chance. You betrayed the chance. My dear grandgodson Litic is one among sons of Cumucul, Thoolean Liddum who bred Caucatin. He is here for the welcoming rights to the underground movement—same as the revolutionary-reactionary movement of yours

that suffers from identity crisis—to trounce this intolerant system that treats threats to it as supernatural hocus-pocus that threatens scientific and critical thinking! Caucatin, mind you, is Tikkbaph Telemus. An unholy crossbreed of Tikbalang and Baphomet. He is not abomination to us, as he is to your state. He is even smarter than you. He secretly took care of Litic and they have formally met when you saw them shake hands.

All we do is make the ideas and matters labelled by the materialist state "unreal," real again. Tell people that activists and aswangs are not folklore. Why are Telemi considered existing while their primogenitor—and even parents—are considered "supernatural?" Because Tikbalangs chose to dwell in the mountains and reject the revolution your bosses claimed to have happened? Well, a revolution of the middle class did happen, but is not the Revolution, if you know what I mean.

All those crap about sexual orgies and cannibalism are all "bollocks" as I could have said when I was still in "character." "Bullshit" that government cohorts such as you propagate. We tried to get you to our side with the mention of desaparecidos and amalgamados—the disappeared and the amalgamated. The people you violated, who did nothing wrong but strive hard to subvert your efforts to maintain your rule and to advance pseudo scientific and quasi technological advancements!

Had you done your research, you would know that I am Bleckes's archenemy. Someone that she could never ever defeat, if we base feat on the destiny carried by our names. "Bollocks!" I think I liked my character. Anyway, I am Boumege—or Bumigi in pure form, Conqueror of Ouroborus. You would meet him in a while. Naah. That was another bollocks, by the way. But we are friends. I and Ouroborus. Really. Which made me the famed Ouracle you listed as a fictional character in a short story that should be killed when found out of the children's ebooks.

Had you done your research, you could have found out that your master Bleckes is the fanatic. She wrote the De Vermis Mysteris—the banned book of archived spells that claimed to "scientifically" summon otherworldly creatures. She is internationally known as The Great Bloch. Bleke—in the original form—is the deity of skin diseases.

Did you really think you wore that plastic-leather clothing? Did not you ask her why you remained invisible even after you "remove" your garments? You invisibility is skin disease. Unaware of the food or drugs experiment conducted and tested on you and your compatriots. You probably acquired that "ability" while being "trained" to be protectors of the state. Which is, after all, only a side effect of exposure to the exclusive food served to you, elite soldiers! Exclusive food with chemicals.

And now you could be asking: "What now? Why tell me all these, when I am just going to be another Prisoner of War that you

would torture until we squeal top secrets." Well, we would love to do that. Our initial plan would have been to separate you into protons and atoms and various units, depending on our whims. In that way, you would still be our prisoner, and we could use you to blackmail the government or strike a negotiation for our demands for social services. But it seems like we would not need to. Besides your bosses that would most probably turn a cold shoulder, you also want to serve Bleckes until your last breath, as your death can be black propaganda against the league of the blasphemous and lumpen culturati such as our group. Right?

From this point, pardon my spontaneity, okay, I would like you to know that you killed yourself in at least eighty percent of multiverses and the possible ripple effects branching into a variety of futures. Which is why I could mock you before you decide doing so, okay?

Bless you. Do your job and you would find out more after doing what you are ought to do.

I banged my mad, grinning face against the floor. Hit the floor with my face so hard until I crushed my teeth into pieces I can swallow, until I pounded so hard they were fine as talc. I licked the powdered teeth off the floor and savoured it in my throat. I broke and disintegrated into the tiniest bits of pieces. I am cosmic dust in a matter of hours—wriggling cosmic dust segmented into the tiniest nanometre. My consciousness is distributed in an uncountable volume of worms half the size of the gnats. The Pope sprinkled me in the skies and I reached the ends of the universe.

I discovered stars—stars better than Pope Latin and Stalin. I was acquainted with some of my co-stars, which are also glowing worms that simply, most probably, look like stones from afar. I saw time as I saw space. I saw time as a where, not as a when, since occurrences from the past and the future happen before me—at my present state.

I saw my comrades. I saw her die countless times in many varying ways. I saw myself born countless times from other mothers. I saw everything and lost track of time, since I failed to comprehend "where" and "when" I am situated. Then, I saw Boumege looking at me, then glancing at other stars. I looked at the stars he looks at and I saw reflections of scenes, reflections of differing times in different spaces. I saw a colossal worm that shines bright as a morning star. It kept on eating its tale, spiralling in eternity. It paused and stared at me. Without letting go his own tail that he seems to consume since time immemorial, I hear his voice that spoke deep inside my head, *I am Ouroborus. Boumege told me about you.*

The author belongs to the University of the Philippines Los Baños community of writers turning out new and at times out of this world work that could upset conventional standards of literature. —Lit Ed

Excommunication

BY DENNIS ANDREW S. AGUINALDO

The excommunication bid for latex presidents aside, let us, o bishops, remember the queued candidates, the cassocks assigned afresh to prey on kid

Acolytes, children of incense and a book. Bishops, with you "white the give, white the take away." We the goers – who time and again elect your random prejudice

Of stained, glassy, cathedral eyes

over the arbitrariness of cosmos – inquire that you may by way unsecular at last illumine: Are the nickel gates

Of prefab units that heaven promised a centimeter less

inscrutable than hair on heads of state, vicars of the vicar, candle-cup boys? Than the zygote?

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Three chapters of love or how it is to love truly

In memory of Comrade Aileen

BY NONILON V. QUEANO

*First, we who love truly
Need unfetter our minds
Across the empire's wide expanse,
Like meteor blazing through the darkest nights with bursts of light,
So the heart could be a ball of fire drilling on the forest,
Or wherever the beloved has hid,
Love grows only in light.*

*Second, the work always kept alive inside:
Educating the masses
On how imperialism has brought suffering and injustice
Everywhere,
Across every space,*

*Tearing down the metaphysic
Which proclaimed that all poverty, suffering, and ignorance
Had been decreed by God in heaven,
Even if clearly God was the businessman
Who amassed wealth from plunder
Of mines, farm lands, weaving houses, kitchens
That belonged to us who had prayed, worshipped,
were spurned, were devastated
By the wicked lie that they spread—
Borne by the terror of the wars that they brought everywhere –
That blessed are the poor and the hungry
For they will be rewarded in the afterlife.
This only the meteoric mind understands.*

*Third, the bearing of arms.
For nothing will put an end to the imperialist plague*

*But a revolution,
We will call this the love that is true,
From the heart that burns,
After raising the consciousness of the masses:
The uprising.
After seeing the love for freedom blossom:
The people's war wrought constantly
In song, faith, and dreaming
No matter how full of risks, distant, protracted.
That is how it is to love truly,
Drawing fire and light in the vast expanse and in forests,
Love will bloom,
Like the struggle,
For what is life worth if one has not loved,
And how is it to love if love be not true.
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She is strong, sophisticated, amazing and above all, TALLER than him.
He is happy go lucky, street smart and above all, a HOPELESS ROMANTIC.
The only problem is, She is an ALIEN!!
They are "MISHIDA ALEXANDER"

What will happen if nearly the whole world was to perish in a nuclear war and the only environment left suitable for the remainder of population was Antarctica?
What would happen if life became so tough the whole mankind lost its faith in GOD?
This is not just a journey of one such population to find a better habitat, but a journey of rediscovery of GOD!!

"GOD OF A MAN"

Read the two e-novels at:
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(Fatal Urge Carefree Kiss)
One new chapter added every week