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YALit

Lens #4: Critical

***The World of the Hunger Games***

*The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins is a young adult novel about life, love, and power in the nation of Panem. Panem holds a Capitol that is exceedingly advanced ruling utmost power over its twelve surrounding districts. The Capitol holds all control over the people in the twelve districts. The people have little to no freedom at all, they have to abide by the rules of the Capitol or face brutal punishment. After a rebellion several years ago, the Capitol holds an annual Hunger Games where one boy and one girl between the ages of 12 and 18 from each of the twelve districts are chosen to fight till the death. The story is told by Katniss Everdeen, who lives in the region of the District 12. Katniss is only 16 and is very strong and mature for her age, well, she has no choice. Katniss’s father was killed in a coal mine, and she was left to fend for her mother who dug herself into a hole after the tragedy and her frail little sister, Prim. No one is allowed to leave district 12, which is why it’s surrounded by a large fence. Unfortunately for Katniss, beyond the fence is the only way she can get food to provide for her family. Katniss hunts with her dearest friend, Gale, who also is sent to the woods to fend for his family. On the day of the reaping, Prim’s name is drawn, but quickly Katniss volunteers herself as a tribute in her place. After a boy is nominated, who Katniss knows as the baker’s son, the two are set to the Capitol to prepare for the games. Through the brutal games, the two help each other to survive. They have each other’s back, with love, compassion, and will to win the seventy-fourth annual Hunger Games.

As young adults read *The Hunger Games* I believe they will be able to take a deeper look inside the life of Katniss Everdeen and what it would be like to live in a nation such as Panem. In the United States of America we have freedom. Such freedom grants us with the will to do just about anything we would like that doesn’t cause harm to ourselves or others. While reading this suspenseful novel, young adults will be gain greater respect and appreciation for our nation that was founded by our forefathers and is now run by our government. Compared to the people of Panem, we live as kings and queens, being that we have access to the utmost stream of wellbeing. As the readers get to know Katniss, they will understand how much one has to fight inside their district and inside the games in order to survive. Katniss is faced with challenges that most ordinary people will never have to face in our society.

I could also see this piece of literature being used to promote awareness about bullying and what it does to one’s self esteem. The Capitol almost takes a role as the worst bully one can come across, if a person doesn’t do what the Capitol says, it makes life for that person horrid. I feel that students can relate this story to bullies because they are almost unavoidable in every school. I admit that lately there has been a vast amount of bulling awareness being spread throughout schools, but I don’t believe this will omit all bullying. Young adults can come to understand how bullying can majorly impact an individual. Who knows, maybe this novel can help in the act to deteriorate and work towards eliminating bullying from our schools.

I thought this novel was well written, keeping me on my toes in suspense waiting to see what was going to happen chapter to chapter. Both the characters and plot were well developed making the story engaging and illuminating the moral(s) of the story. Well-written and engaging stories catch the attention of the audience (young adults) keeping them engulfed in their readings, and I believe *The Hunger Games* did just that.