

# 'Mockingjay' doesn't live up to 'Catching Fire'

By Jeremy Miller

Having destroyed the Hunger Games, Katniss must now move forward to her biggest challenge yet: bringing down the Capitol.

"Hunger Games Mockingjay Part 1" picks up right where "Catching Fire" left off. Katniss awakens in District 13, the once rebellious district that challenged the Capitol some years ago. She's given a pretty bleak tour and meets the president of the resistance, Alma Coin (Julianne Moore). Coin and Katniss' once enemy Plutarch (Philip Seymour Hoffman) are convinced that Katniss is the future of the rebellion as she's earned some serious street credit throughout the districts for shaking things up quite a bit at the games.

It takes a little convincing as Katniss is in perma-panic mode over the mystery of where on earth Peeta (Josh Hutcherson) is.

She soon discovers some colliding information. First, Peeta is being puppeted by President Snow (Donald Sutherland) at the Capitol, and that her home District 12 has been destroyed.



The Miller Meter – 3 out of 5 stars.



Katniss agrees to be the poster-child for the resistance and they start production on some promo pieces full of epic sentiment that could rival any Ridley Scott trailer. Meanwhile, President Snow has Peeta telling everyone to cease fighting, as the outcome isn't what they think it'll be. These two just can't seem to get on the same page.

That right there is essentially the plot.

Now, before I dive into my thoughts on the film I'd like to preface it with this: I did not read the books. It's not that I don't enjoy reading; the medium just doesn't do it for me. I'm a movie guy. The argument that "the book was better" simply doesn't work in the context of a conversation with me about movies.

OK, that being said, here it is. I liked the movie. I did not love it. I love the characters of the Hunger Games and I love the story. It subtly reminds me of the Matrix trilogy with less epic fight scenes and more comfortable love scenes.

What I don't understand is how I spent two hours in the theater and don't really know why. "Catching Fire" was awesome, as far as sequels go. The middle movie in a trilogy always catches the heat. It's building the story for the epic third chapter that we all selfishly want to skip to. "Catching Fire" achieved that purpose so why then do we need a third chapter split into two parts?

On my drive home I planned it all out in my head and we could have done part one in 40 minutes. Add that to a 2.5 hour run time and we could have had part one and part two in one action

packed epic third installment.



I did love the acting, as always, minus of course Liam Hemsworth who serves a purpose but doesn't put forth a whole lot of passion. The story, script and acting were all on point; my only other beef other than its seemingly unnecessary existence was the visual experience. There were several instances that somewhat sloppy camera work took away from the power of a scene.

My 3/5 rating is based on the fact that it was a good movie, but I didn't need it. I want the war. I want action and emotion and epic loss and conflict. I didn't get any of that from part one, but I admittedly still had fun.

Here's my closing thought: The "Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" had a massive run time of 3 hours and 21 minutes. Why? Because that's all they needed to give us an amazing climax and closure to the trilogy. Guess what, we all sat through it, we all loved it, and the Academy gave it 11 Oscars. Why then must they split a single movie's plot into two when one would have sufficed? Maybe it had something to do with the \$121 million opening weekend. Clever studio execs.

Go see the movie, you'll like it, it'll be fun, but don't expect anything but filler story and tidbits of action with a little bit of confused teenage hormones sprinkled on top.

*South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews [online](#).*