

A popular book and exciting new film.

Introduction

The Hunger Games is a book by the American author Suzanne Collins. It was published in 2008 and has sold millions of copies. It is the first book for young readers to sell a million electronic books and you can buy it in 26 different languages. *The Hunger Games* is now a very successful film. It made 152.5 million dollars in its first weekend in North America!

A fight to the death

The story is set in the future, after the destruction of North America. The country is called Panem. There are twelve poor districts governed by the rich Capitol. There was a thirteenth district in the past but the Capitol destroyed them because they rebelled.

The Capitol organises the Hunger Games every year to punish the districts. One boy and one girl aged 12 to 18 fight in a battle. Only one person will live. The chosen teenagers are called 'tributes'. The whole country must watch the games on television.

The story is about Katniss Everdeen, a 16-year-old girl. Her father died and now she has to kill animals for her family to eat. Her younger sister, Prim, is chosen to be a 'tribute', but Katniss volunteers to go instead. The other 'tribute' from District 12 is a boy named Peeta.

Where did the idea for *The Hunger Games* come from?

One night in 2003, Suzanne Collins was watching TV. It was at the time of the US invasion of Iraq. The only programmes she could find on TV were 'reality' programmes of young people competing to win a million dollars and news programmes about the war. Suzanne says that the two things started to mix together in her head and she had the idea for *The Hunger Games*.

She has always found news programmes of wars upsetting. When she was a child, her father was a pilot in the US air force and he fought in Vietnam. It was a very frightening experience for her.

Too much violence?

Some parents in the US have complained about the violence in the book. But Suzanne says she was very worried about how much violence we see on TV nowadays. Suzanne is also worried about the amount of reality TV we watch. 'We put too much of our lives on TV,' she says. 'And we care less for people because of this.' She said that writing about death and violence in the story was the hardest thing for her to do and she hopes it will make people think about what they watch in future.

Brendan Dunne