

# Hunger Games: Mocking Jay Part 2 (2015)

Rated PG-13. Running time: 2 hours 17 min.

Our content ratings (1-10); Violence 5; Language 2; Sex /Nudity 1.

Our star rating (1-5): 4

*Alas for those who devise wickedness and evil deeds on their beds! When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in their power.*

*Micah 2:1*

*He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly...*

*Luke 1:51-52*

With the exception of [Z For Zacharia](#) none of the science fiction dystopian films of recent years aimed at young adults are as moving as *The Hunger Games* series. With each film Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence) grows more interesting, and the ethics of the revolt for which she has become the poster child (a Joan of Arc with bow and arrow) murkier. (For those who have not read the books or seen the first 3 films I refer you to the brief summary posted by my fellow RtS writer Jane Wells at <https://readthespirit.com/bird-on-fire/innocence-in-a-time-of-war-mockingjay-part-2/>. She's even written a book on the series.)

This film begins where the 3<sup>rd</sup> placeholder film left off. Her fellow Hunger Games tribute Peeta Mellark (Josh Hutcherson),

tortured and brainwashed by President Snow (Donald Sutherland), has been rescued and brought to the rebels' headquarters. The mentally disturbed had Peeta tried to strangle Katniss near the end of the last film, so now we can see the bruises on Katniss' neck as she undergoes therapy to restore her injured voice. She wants to plunge back into action, but both President Coin (Julianne Moore) and her chief advisor Plutarch Heavensbee (Phillip Seymour Hoffman) prefer that she make more propaganda films to inspire the rebel troops. She chafes under such restrictions, so we know she will find a way to move back into the thick of the action.

Katniss is disturbed by what she hears Gale (Liam Hemsworth) and others discussing, such as using a double bomb against enemy installations, the second going off minutes after the first one, thereby killing and maiming those who have come to the aid of soldiers injured in the first blast. (Note: this is current U.S. policy. In [Good Kill](#), the film about US pilots controlling the drones used to destroy alleged terrorists, the controller based in the American Southwest fires the initial rocket from the drone hovering over the house in Afghanistan into which the terrorist has gone: it destroys the house, and then when rescuers gather to dig out and render medical aid, a second rocket is fired at them.) Also, during a discussion about blasting and burying those in one of Snow's underground bases, Katniss insists that one tunnel be left open for an escape route.

Our heroine, of course, does return to the fight along with Gale, and even Peeta is released, although still suffering bouts of uncontrolled hostility. He will require close watching, lest he become as much a danger as Snow's troops. On the outskirts of the Capitol Katniss endures the shock and horror of war, one of those whom she loves the most becoming a casualty. She is horrified at this, her hurt and rage increasing even more later on when she learns who ordered the attack upon the mostly civilian crowd seeking refuge in the

grounds of President Snow's palace. This leads to Katniss doing something totally unexpected, unless you already have read all three of the books.

The film boasts exciting action scenes, but even better, numerous quiet ones that lend themselves to discussions of war and its corrupting influence upon those on both sides of the conflict. Although Jennifer Lawrence holds most of our attention with her increasingly good portrayal of a young woman who's been to hell and back, I am sure many of us will sigh when we see Phillip Seymour Hoffman in his last role. Despite the brevity of his screen time, he lends a touch of class to this thought-provoking dystopian film that suggests we look more deeply at our present day culture— on our superficial reality shows and fascination with celebrity dress and doings; violent sports spectacles; political candidates who are so similar to President Snow that we ought to feel uncomfortable at their popularity; and the ways in which, while fighting a ruthless enemy, we tend to adopt some of their values and tactics.

*This review with a set of discussion questions will be in the Dec. 2015 issue of Visual Parables.*