

SUNRISE ON THE REAPING



A HUNGER GAMES NOVEL BY

SUZANNE COLLINS

Copyright © 2025 by Suzanne Collins

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*. SCHOLASTIC, SCHOLASTIC PRESS, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, or used to train any artificial intelligence technologies, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data available

ISBN 978-1-5461-7146-1

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

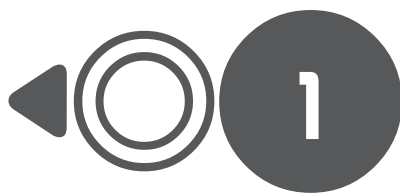
Printed in Italy

25 26 27 28 29

183

First edition, March 2025

Book design by Elizabeth B. Parisi



“Happy birthday, Haymitch!”

The upside of being born on reaping day is that you can sleep late on your birthday. It’s pretty much downhill from there. A day off school hardly compensates for the terror of the name drawing. Even if you survive that, nobody feels like having cake after watching two kids being hauled off to the Capitol for slaughter. I roll over and pull the sheet over my head.

“Happy birthday!” My ten-year-old brother, Sid, gives my shoulder a shake. “You said be your rooster. You said you wanted to get to the woods at daylight.”

It’s true. I’m hoping to finish my work before the ceremony so I can devote the afternoon to the two things I love best — wasting time and being with my girl, Lenore Dove. My ma makes indulging in either of these a challenge, since she regularly announces that no job is too hard or dirty or tricky for me, and even the poorest people can scrape up a few pennies to dump their misery on somebody else. But given the dual occasions of the day, I think she’ll allow for a bit of freedom as long as my work is done. It’s the Gamemakers who might ruin my plans.

“Haymitch!” wails Sid. “The sun’s coming up!”

“All right, all right. I’m up, too.” I roll straight off the mattress onto the floor and pull on a pair of shorts made from a government-issued flour sack. The words COURTESY OF THE CAPITOL end up stamped across my butt. My ma wastes nothing. Widowed young when my pa died in a coal mine fire, she’s raised Sid and me by

taking in laundry and making every bit of anything count. The hardwood ashes in the fire pit are saved for lye soap. Eggshells get ground up to fertilize the garden. Someday these shorts will be torn into strips and woven into a rug.

I finish dressing and toss Sid back in his bed, where he burrows right down in the patchwork quilt. In the kitchen, I grab a piece of corn bread, an upgrade for my birthday instead of the gritty, dark stuff made from the Capitol flour. Out back, my ma's already stirring a steaming kettle of clothes with a stick, her muscles straining as she flips a pair of miner's overalls. She's only thirty-five, but life's sorrows have already cut lines into her face, like they do.

Ma catches sight of me in the doorway and wipes her brow. "Happy sixteenth. Sauce on the stove."

"Thanks, Ma." I find a saucepan of stewed plums and scoop some on my bread before I head out. I found these in the woods the other day, but it's a nice surprise to have them all hot and sugared.

"Need you to fill the cistern today," Ma says as I pass.

We've got cold running water, only it comes out in a thin stream that would take an age to fill a bucket. There's a special barrel of pure rainwater she charges extra for because the clothes come out softer, but she uses our well water for most of the laundry. What with pumping and hauling, filling the cistern's a two-hour job even with Sid's help.

"Can't it wait until tomorrow?" I ask.

"I'm running low and I've got a mountain of wash to do," she answers.

"This afternoon, then," I say, trying to hide my frustration. If the reaping's done by one, and assuming we're not part of this year's sacrifice, I can finish the water by three and still see Lenore Dove.

A blanket of mist wraps protectively around the worn, gray houses of the Seam. It would be soothing if it wasn't for the scattered cries of children being chased in their dreams. In the last few weeks, as the Fiftieth Hunger Games has drawn closer, these sounds have become more frequent, much like the anxious thoughts I work hard to keep at bay. *The second Quarter Quell. Twice as many kids.* No point in worrying, I tell myself, there's nothing you can do about it. *Like two Hunger Games in one.* No way to control the outcome of the reaping or what follows it. So don't feed the nightmares. Don't let yourself panic. Don't give the Capitol that. They've taken enough already.