

Catching Fire and revolutions (spoilers)

Today was a very anticipated day for fans of “The Hunger Games.” It was release day for the second film in “The Hunger Games” movie series, “Catching Fire.” As you may remember from last year, many of bloggers, including myself, took on the subject of the violence portrayed in the first movie.

As we turn our attention to Katniss as she adjusts to life after the 74th Hunger Games, she and her friends find a country on the brink of revolution. Because each district in the fictional country of Panem is isolated from the others, Katniss has no idea how fragile the state of affairs really is. It’s been at least 74 years since the Great Rebellion and the institution of the annual Hunger Games. The president of Panem wants Katniss to stop rebellion on her victory tour with fellow victor, Peeta, but it’s too late for that.

I have a t-shirt for the movie with the saying, “Every revolution begins with a single spark.” I received the t-shirt for Christmas and I have spent days since then thinking about the validity of that statement. As a degreed historian (a BS, but that’s still good), I find the idea to be a bit too absolute. And for good reason: nothing happens in a vacuum.

Think about it. It took many events, people, personalities, and such to get to the American Revolution. Oh, sure, people will say it started with the Boston Tea Party or the battle at Lexington and Concord. People will tell you about the first casualty of a war not yet declared, named Crispus Attucks at the Boston Massacre. The reality is many people contributed to the start of this and many other revolutions through history.



Josh Hutcherson and Jennifer Lawrence star in the movie “The Hunger Games: Catching Fire.” (CNS photo/Lionsgate)

I believe that’s the wonderful thing about revolutions. While they bring about change and reform, they are never started by one single person at one single point in time. We want to believe that because it’s easy. It streamlines our lives and makes it easier to see fixed points in history. Historians know better. And if you’re a fan of “The Hunger Games,” you also know better.

President Snow points to a couple of actions by Katniss and Peeta during the 74th Hunger Games which inspired revolution in the districts. I believe those seeds had been planted long ago. As each generation lives on, the fear of the president and the Capitol fade. The fear which fades is replaced by hope. Hope that is renewed during

each successive Hunger Games. By the 74th, conditions are ripe for revolution. Katniss wasn't the spark, she became the symbol of the revolution. I believe, in the context of this revolution and rebellion, it was due to happen without Katniss. You can call her the spark, but, more accurately, the face of it. Every revolution has a leader, and she will, reluctantly, become that leader.

While some of you may think I'm reading way too much into a work of fiction and great movies, I believe that is exactly what Suzanne Collins, the author of "The Hunger Games" book trilogy, meant to do. I believe she meant to inspire us through Katniss but also to force us to think about issues such as the status quo and what leads to war, revolution and rebellion.

In this crazy, broken world, we see these things all of the time - broadcast on the news as though it were just as it is another day. Syria and the Ukraine are but the latest in a long line of stories of civil war, rebellion and revolution. All of the recent attention on these countries have at least one thing in common: there were signs the people would rebel. Did anyone see the signs? Did anyone warn of possible war? Reality must set in at some point and tell us to find out why. The why will help us understand how to move forward. The why will help us see the signs of war when they come again.

Have you seen "The Hunger Games" movies or read the books? What do you think of the rebellion in the fictional country of Panem as it relates to current world events? Do you think a look into the history of these countries and its leaders could have prevented the problems currently experienced in Syria and the Ukraine? It's time to weigh in and I look forward to reading your comments!