

**Rebellious Lass:
From Robin Hood to Juliet—Katniss Everdeen at Play in *The Hunger Games***

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Abstract

By tracing Katniss Everdeen’s character development from gender-bending ersatz Robin Hood to revisionist historian to star-crossed lover playing the role of Juliet, we can see how she reveals conflict and history as essential elements of this saga of adolescent rebellion.

Keywords

The Hunger Games, Katniss Everdeen, Robin Hood, Juliet

In this essay, I will connect Katniss Everdeen—protagonist of *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins—to two familiar literary characters who help us see how she develops from an angry impulsive adolescent to a more mature person entering young adulthood. First, I connect her to Robin Hood through the bow and arrow each uses. Beyond this object, I will present examples of each archer’s prowess to further demonstrate how alike they are. Then, in keeping with an essential characteristic of these literary creations, I will show how Katniss’s actions embody a rebellious spirit—which I believe is kin to Robin Hood’s—that prompts sympathetic reactions from her audience.

Second, in the case of Juliet, I will connect the two adolescent women with the use of a phrase: “star cross’d lovers.” Because Juliet is a difficult character for Katniss to emulate, I will also explicate the directorial role played by her mentor Haymitch Abernathy, an action that I believe helps Katniss to mature. Finally, I will conclude with a scene from the novel where Katniss plays both roles so effectively that she is able to revise the rules and rewrite the history of the Hunger Games. This revision, I believe, demonstrates her development from a rebellious adolescent to a young adult capable of confronting forces of inequity. All along the way I will rely on the author’s words to refresh our memories—and our enjoyment—of the novel.

We meet Katniss Everdeen on Reaping Day, as she awakes and then prepares to retreat to the woods. We see her depart the hearth of her home, inhabited by a beloved younger sister, an ugly ungrateful cat and a dysfunctional widowed mother, escaping these responsibilities for the freedom of the woods. These woods allow us to begin associating Katniss with Robin Hood, that legendary English outlaw of the 12th century who haunted Sherwood Forest, creating a community based on courage as he defied elements of a corrupted society. An object with which we may associate him is the bow with its arrows.

In *The Hunger Games*, this object is quickly attached to our heroine. Soon after awakening and departing her home she enters the woods where, Katniss informs us, “As soon as I’m in the trees, I retrieve a bow and sheath of arrows from a hollow log” (5). Katniss’ association with a bow and arrows is reinforced by her hunting companion Gale, who later in the day has a strong word of advice before she departs for the Hunger Games: “get your hands on a bow” (39), he urges her. Indeed, she is able to do so in the Arena when one of the Careers [adolescents trained from childhood to be Games players] who snatched the weapon from the cornucopia of supplies dies a horrible death, presenting Katniss the opportunity to secure her preferred weapon.

Let us attach Katniss to the object by referring to this grim and gruesome scene.

The bows. The arrows. I must get them. I reach Glimmer just as the cannon fires [signaling the death of a contestant and the imminent arrival of a hovercraft to retrieve the body.] The tracker jackers [genetically altered wasps] have vanished. This girl, so

breathhtakingly beautiful in her golden dress the night of the interviews, is unrecognizable. Her features eradicated, her limbs three times their normal size. The stinger lumps have begun to explode, spewing putrid green liquid around her. I have to break several of what used to be her fingers with a stone to free the bow. The sheath of arrows is pinned under her back. I try to roll over her body by pulling on one arm but the flesh disintegrates in my hands and I fall back on the ground. (192)

Eventually, Katniss secures the weapon, returning her—bow in hand—to a familiar role as one at home in the woods.

While the bow and arrows help us to associate the novel's protagonist with Robin Hood, it is more than objects that cement the association: two of Katniss' actions solidify the comparison between this pair of criminal perpetrators. The first occurs at the culmination of the training sessions for the Hunger Games when tributes meet the Gamemakers privately; the second occurs during the Games themselves.

However, before relating the examples from the Hunger Games, let me review some 12th century literature, for each of Katniss' feats of archery echoes an oft-told tale of Robin Hood. Let's quickly revisit it.

To synopsise Francis James Child, who included the tale among *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, the Sheriff of Nottingham is having all sorts of trouble capturing the bold outlaw Robin Hood. Though the administrator travelled to London to consult with King Richard, he is met with no sympathy from his majesty. The king admonishes him to do his job, even if it means resorting to trickery. And so he does, laying a trap with an especially desirable prize: "an arrow with a golden head/And shaft of silver white" (v. 7). Tempted, Robin Hood is determined to "try my skill/At yon brave archery" (v. 11). Little John advises the band of bowmen to disguise themselves before marching to the fair where Robin is clad in red rather than green—"the prize he got/For he was both sure and dead" (v. 22), a direct result of his shooting skill.

This aptitude is exemplified by Katniss when we look to the training sessions where tributes from each of the twelve Panemian districts go to hone or to learn skills that will serve them in the arena of the Hunger Games. The purpose of the tribute-wide demonstrations is to assess each contestant so that a betting line can be established for wagerers; and, so sponsors may be attracted to potential winning tributes. The gifts given by sponsors during the game—a kind of *res ex machina*—can be crucial to survival. Directed by her advisor Haymitch Abernathy to veil the talent heretofore witnessed only by her friend Gale, Katniss avoids the archery station until she is called before the Gamemakers in a private demonstration of prowess.

Like Robin Hood, Katniss has resorted to disguise, though in her case it is her skill with a bow that she hides. So, blind to her talent, bored because she is the last of two dozen tributes to present themselves, rendered soporific by drink, the Gamemakers all but ignore Katniss as she demonstrates her archeristic aptitude. Initially unaware that she is being overlooked, Katniss compliments herself: "It's excellent shooting" (101) and looks to her judges. She sees that "a few are nodding approval, but the majority of them are fixated on a roast pig that has just arrived at their banquet table" (101).

The Gamemakers' inattention enrages Katniss, sparking her inner rebel. Though she knows that these people personify power, still "suddenly I am furious, that with my life on the line, they don't even have the decency to pay attention to me. That I'm being upstaged by a pig. My heart starts to pound, I can feel my face burning" (101-2). Katniss leaves the realm of reason and surrenders to her emotion: "Without thinking, I pull an arrow from my quiver and send it straight at the Gamemakers' table. I hear shouts of alarm as people stumble back. The arrow skewers the apple in the pig's mouth and pins it to the wall behind it. Everyone stares at me in disbelief" (102).

Not content with being half a rebel, Katniss goes whole hog. “Thank you for your consideration, I say [here, I imagine irony dripping like pork fat from her lips]. Then I give a slight bow and walk straight toward the exit without being dismissed” (102). This angry impulsive action is exactly the sort of behavior that we expect from an adolescent.

Another example of the association between Katniss Everdeen and Robin Hood occurs in the Arena during the Games themselves when Katniss aims to thwart the gang of Careers by destroying their cache of supplies.

Katniss approaches the cache cautiously, reconnoitering the area, using her hunting skills to help her plot a strategy to achieve the goal of robbing the rich Careers of their sustenance, creating a more egalitarian situation, providing her a greater chance of winning by surviving the Hunger Games. As she surveys the net-enclosed pile of loot she learns from the actions of Foxface, the vixenous tribute from District 5, that the supply dump is booby trapped. She racks her brain for a solution to destroying the goods upon which the Careers depend, thinking rocks, flame, stealth in turn before returning to the image that dominates her boldly rebellious act before the Gamemakers. She hits upon the idea of shooting at apples. I quote the novel by way of explicating both her thought process and her performance.

There is a solution to this, I know there is, if I can only focus hard enough. I stare at the pyramid, the bins, the crates, too heavy to topple over with an arrow. Maybe one contains cooking oil and the burning arrow [idea] is reviving when I realize I could end up losing all twelve of my arrows and not get a direct hit on an oil bin, since I'd just be guessing. I'm genuinely thinking of trying to re-create Foxface's trip up the pyramid in hopes of finding a new means of destruction when my eyes light on the burlap bag of apples. I could sever the rope in one shot, didn't I do as much in the Training Center? It's a big bag, but it still might only be good for one explosion. If only I could free the apples themselves. . .

I know what to do. I move into range and give myself three arrows to get the job done. I place my feet carefully, block out the rest of the world as I take meticulous aim. The first arrow tears through the side of the bag near the top, leaving a split in the burlap. The second widens it to a gaping hole. I can see the first apple teetering when I let the third arrow go, catching the torn flap of burlap and ripping it from the bag. (220-1)

“For a moment, everything seems frozen in time” (221) to Katniss. This moment yields to one that could be captioned “Eureka!” or “Hallelujah!” or “Oorah!” as “the apples spill to the ground and I'm blown backward in the air” (221). Her skill as an archer has literally catapulted Katniss into success. Like the legendary outlaw Robin Hood, she has taken from the rich, using her talent with a bow and arrow combined with her wily woodsman senses to provide a more equal environment for the remainder of the Hunger Games.

Now that we have provided textual examples to establish the association between Robin Hood and Katniss Everdeen, we can go beyond objects and actions to see how Katniss shares a spirit of rebellion with the ersatz English revolutionary, a spirit that indicates her development from adolescent to adult. I believe that Katniss' spirit of rebellion is sparked of necessity, for it is against starvation that Katniss initially acts to save her family. No submissive lass she, the female woodsman violates Panem's law in a way that would do Robin Hood proud, for “even though trespassing in the woods is illegal and poaching carries the severest of penalties” (5), Katniss quietly follows in the footsteps of Sherwood Forest's most famous citizen, breaking the law in the name of humanity, of decency, of common sense, of survival.

I believe that this basic willingness to trespass and poach is at the heart of Katniss Everdeen's rebellious spirit and I believe that this heartfelt spirit motivates her actions while also attracting rebels who support her revision of the history of Panem and the rules of the Hunger Games.

In order to see more clearly what it is that she rewrites, perhaps it is best to review the history of Panem. Let us look at an early scene from the novel where Katniss stands anxiously in the town square alongside her adolescent peers, awaiting the Reaping, Panem's version of a lottery. All the citizens of District 12 listen "as the town clock strikes two, [and] the mayor steps up to the podium and begins to read" (18).

The ritual is a longstanding one as Katniss tells us.

It's the same story every year. He tells of the history of Panem, the country that rose up out of the ashes of a place that was once called North America. He lists the disasters, the droughts, the storms, the fires, the encroaching seas that swallowed up so much of the land, the brutal war for what little sustenance remained. The result was Panem, a shining Capitol ringed by thirteen districts, which brought peace and prosperity to its citizens. Then came the Dark Days, the uprising of the districts against the Capitol. Twelve were defeated, the thirteenth obliterated. The treaty of treason gave us the new laws to guarantee peace and, as our yearly reminder that the Dark Days must never be repeated, it gave us the Hunger Games.

The rules of the Hunger Games are simple. In punishment for the uprising, each of the twelve districts must provide one girl and one boy, called tributes, to participate. [the term "tribute" is appropriate, as a tribute is a sacrifice as well as a payment made in acknowledgement of submission]. The twenty-four tributes will be imprisoned in a vast outdoor arena that could hold anything from a burning desert to a frozen wasteland. Over a period of several weeks, the competitors must fight to the death. The last tribute standing wins. (18)

To retain the conflict among districts so that they will not unite in rebellion, "the Capitol will show the winning district gifts of grain and oil and even delicacies like sugar while the rest of us battle starvation" (19).

Now, let us examine two examples of Katniss' rebellious spirit and of how this spirit attracts approval, agreement, acquiescence and even support from members of Panem's society.

Her first overt act of rebellion occurs during that adolescent rite of passage called the Reaping. Fueled by family feelings, Katniss volunteers to replace her sister Prim, whose name was drawn to serve as female tribute from this Appalachian region. Although volunteers are not unknown in other parts of Panem—indeed, in some places young adults called Careers train as professional tributes—in District 12 "volunteers are all but extinct" (22). In fact, Katniss' act catches officials by surprise so that, for example, Effie Trinket—the capitol's liaison to this perennially losing district—isn't sure of the protocol for volunteering.

But the mayor himself supports Katniss, asking with common sense "What does it matter?" (22), a stance that permits Katniss' revisionist action. Nothing formal here—the rules are ignored, as they are each time Katniss enters the woods. The mayor repeats the practical phrase combined with a command: "What does it matter?" he repeats gruffly. "Let her come forward" (23). And she does, met by the Capitol's representative with the sort of false enthusiasm that plays best on reality TV as Effie Trinket trills: "Come on, everybody! Let's give a big round of applause to our newest tribute!" (23).

In response, the people of District 12, the adolescent peers of Katniss Everdeen, their parents, their siblings and their extended families join this woodsman who volunteers to replace her beloved younger sister, understanding that little Prim stands no chance in games controlled by the Capitol. As she looks at them from the stage, Katniss recognizes the solidarity and the rebellion of her family, her friends, her fellow citizens:

To the everlasting credit of the people of District 12, not one person claps [in response to Effie's exhortation]. Not even the ones holding betting slips, the ones who are

usually beyond caring. Possibly because they know me from the Hob, or knew my father, or have encountered Prim, who no one can help loving. So instead of acknowledging applause, I stand there unmoving while they take part in the boldest form of dissent they can manage. Silence. Which says we do not agree. We do not condone. All of this is wrong. (24)

It seems to me that the citizens of District 12 have themselves awaited an author bold enough to revise the history they despise by defying the ritual imposed upon them. They have found this person in Katniss Everdeen, recognizing the personification—the embodiment—of a rebellious adolescent spirit that they acknowledge. Katniss perceives this recognition. She sees that
...

Something unexpected happens. At least, I don't expect it because I don't think of District 12 as a place that cares about me. But a shift has occurred since I stepped up to take Prim's place, and now it seems I have become someone precious. At first one, then another, then almost every member of the crowd touches the three middle fingers of their left hand to their lips and hold it out to me. It is an old and rarely used gesture of our district, occasionally seen at funerals. It means thanks, it means admiration. . . . (24)

And, I would add, it means that we are rooting for you, against the Capitol.

A second example of a rebellious spirit is presented after Katniss destroys the Careers' cache of supplies, after she makes her wounded way back to her ally Rue, who reminds her mightily of sister Prim. She finds her friend just in time to see her receive a death blow—a spear to the gut that sympathetically strikes Katniss's spirit. Katniss kills Rue's murderer, comforts her little friend as she dies and then allows her emotion to guide her.

I want to do something, right here, right now, to shame them, to make them accountable, to show the Capitol that whatever they do or force us to do there is a part of every tribute they don't own. That Rue was more than a piece in their Games. And so am I.

A few steps into the woods grows a bank of wildflowers. Perhaps they are really weeds of some sort, but they have blossoms in beautiful shades of violet and yellow and white. I gather up an armful and come back to Rue's side. Slowly, one stem at a time, I decorate her body in the flowers. Covering the ugly wound. Wreathing her face. Weaving her hair with bright colors.

They'll have to show it [on TV to the Panemian citizens watching the Hunger Games]. Or, even if they choose to turn the cameras elsewhere at this moment, they'll have to bring them back when they collect the bodies and everyone will see her then and know, I did it. (237)

Katniss completes her act of rebellion with the repetition of a gesture with which we are familiar. After whispering, "Bye Rue. . . I press the three middle fingers of my left hand against my lips and hold them out in her direction" (237). This gesture, in addition to meaning thanks, to meaning admiration, also "means good-bye to someone you love" (24). With this public display of affection Katniss dares defy the powers that be, as she runs contrary to the Hunger Games as a setting filled with temporary alliances and violent hostility. Her heartfelt actions attract the attention of Rue's supportive neighbors, field hands and orchard workers, her well-wishers from District 11.

We know this because as Katniss awaits some sort of disciplinary measure in response to her snub at the Gamemakers and Capitol politicians, "a silver parachute. . . a gift from a sponsor. . . floats down" (238). Let's follow the rebellious adolescent's narration as she realizes that she has attracted yet another group of Panemians who acknowledge her spirit.

I open the parachute and find a small loaf of bread. . . . this bread came from District 11. . . . What must it have cost the people of District 11 who can't even feed themselves? How many would've had to do without to scrape up a coin to put in the collection for this one loaf? It had been meant for Rue, surely. But instead of pulling the gift, they'd authorized

Haymitch to give it to me. As a thank you? Or because, like me, they don't like to let debts go unpaid? For whatever reason, this is a first. A district gift to a tribute who's not your own. (239)

Katniss's awareness of the conspiratorially silent act of rebellion from District 11 is further highlighted in the next paragraph, where she speaks directly to her fellow rebels, fully conscious of the fact that everyone—including Capitol oppressors—will hear what Rue's supporters dare not voice. As the day's last rays of sunlight shine upon her face, spotlighting her presence for the TV cameras, Katniss addresses her silent associates: "My thanks to the people of District Eleven'. . . I want them to know I know where it came from. That the full value of their gift has been recognized" (239). "Full value," of course, includes not only the loaf's value as sustenance, but also the certain punitive consequence this action will attract as a result of their willful association with Katniss Everdeen. If quiet can be echoed, then in District 11's gift we hear the echo of the silent tribute given Katniss by her family, friends and neighbors of District 12 on Reaping Day. And, if growing development from adolescent to young adult can be noted, then we note that this action is much more mature than our heroine's thoughtless shot at the Gamemakers in an earlier scene.

Now that we have seen the relationship between Katniss Everdeen and Robin Hood, a relationship suggested by first a bow, then examples of archeristic prowess and finally reinforced by gestures of acknowledged rebellion, I want to compare her to another literary character: Juliet Capulet, the adolescent heroine of William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. However, where our observation that Katniss is linked to Robin is based upon a bow with its arrows, we can see that Katniss and Juliet are joined not by objects but by language. Let us look quickly at the Prologue to the play to place the phrase. Shakespeare writes: "From forth the fatal loins of these two foes [the Capulets and the Montagues]/ A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life" (lines 5—6). It is the description "star-cross'd lovers" that bonds Katniss and Juliet. Bonded though they may be, however, Katniss plays the role with difficulty as it forces her to assume characteristics unnatural to her as she develops from adolescent to adult, from an angry impulsive teenager to a young adult capable of manipulating personal and social rebellion in order to revise Panemian history.

Where she plays the part of Robin Hood as though she were born to do so, she needs direction to act like Juliet. Luckily, Haymitch Abernathy is her lifeline, assigned—as a winning tribute from District 12—to mentor her. As a sympathetic adult he schemes on her behalf, guiding Katniss toward a performance resulting in a spectacular climax, a calculated action that rewrites the history of the Hunger Games in such a way as to provide a dangerous denouement to this potentially tragic—yet ultimately romantic—play.

We can determine an inciting point for Haymitch's involvement in Katniss' character development early in the Training Sessions for Katniss and Peeta, the male tribute for District 12 reaped from among his fellow adolescents. Worn weary by years of losing children to Career tributes, Haymitch seems cynically uninterested in assisting this couple. However, he changes his mind and agrees to coach them, so long as they will follow his directions. He clearly has a plan for he commands them, "In public, I want you by each other's side every minute. . . . You will be together, you will appear amiable to each other" (92). Although Katniss complains that "It's wearing us both out" (98), Haymitch continues to play the role of director as the Training Session ends and interviews begin. "Remember [he growls at them at one point] 'you're still a happy pair. So act like it'" (123).

The pair moves from happy to loving when—during his interview with Caesar Flickerman—Peeta declares his love for Katniss. The confession elicits a positive response from the live audience as it is noted that there are "Sounds of sympathy from the crowd. Unrequited love they can relate to" (130). The allusion to and connections with Romeo and Juliet are cemented with Katniss's reaction to Peeta's confession: "Poor tragic us" (134) as well as Director Haymitch's approval

voiced thusly in this explication for Katniss' sake: "He made you look desirable! And let's face it, you can use all the help you can get in that department. You were about as romantic as dirt until he said he wanted you. Now they all do. You're all they're talking about" (135). It is then that Haymitch utters the epithet eternally applied to the adolescents from Shakespeare's Verona: [You two are] "The star-crossed lovers" though he craftily changes the setting from Renaissance Italy to post-apocalyptic Panem by concluding the statement "from District Twelve!" (135). Thus, we cement the bond between Katniss and Juliet.

Though Haymitch and we see the bond, the adolescent Katniss protests "But we're not star-crossed lovers!" (135), forcing her mentor to reveal his strategy for surviving the Hunger Games: "Who cares? It's all a big show. It's all how you're perceived. The most I could say about you after your interview was that you were nice enough, although that in itself was a small miracle. Now I can say you're a heartbreaker. Oh, oh, oh, how the boys back home fall longingly at your feet. Which do you think will get you more sponsors?" (135)

Initially indignant, unwilling to shed her persona as a female woodsman from Sherwood Forest in favor of a passive object of Veronian adoration, Katniss nevertheless capitulates: "Star-crossed lovers. Haymitch is right, they eat that stuff up in the Capitol" (136).

Let's focus on one particular example of how Haymitch's strategy pays off before presenting the finale of Katniss' overt rebellion, an action that I believe demonstrates her development from adolescent to young adult.

As Katniss and Peeta hunker down, hidden in a cave, a deluge that would do Noah proud forces the female woodsman to confront her dilemma. She and Peeta are starving, the weather prevents her from using her bow and arrow to good effect and she confesses to herself that "Haymitch is our only hope, but nothing is forthcoming, either from lack of money—everything will cost an exorbitant amount—or because he's dissatisfied with our performance. Probably the latter" (299). Katniss feels her way into the part she's playing. She understands: "My instincts tell me Haymitch isn't just looking for physical affection, he wants something more personal" (300).

I believe that Katniss understands what Haymitch wants all of Panem to realize: that it would be a tragedy if Katniss and Peeta die, that a better ending to these Games would have this pair of tributes live happily ever after. As mentor to the "star-cross'd" pair, Haymitch's intention is to redirect the play, changing the ending from tragic to romantic. Katniss plays along.

Realizing her limitations at playing in love, Katniss draws her bow and aims an amorous arrow from Cupid directly at Peeta's heart, coaxing him into playing lead. As we have come to expect, she strikes her target cleanly, powerfully and perfectly, eliciting from her smitten Romeo the poignant story of him as a second-generation lovestruck baker, of how his father fell in love with Katniss' mother when she was a lass; of how this woman herself rebelled against social status and cultural custom by marrying Katniss' father, a man beneath her family's merchant class; of how Katniss sang on their first day at school, entrancing songbirds into silence, as had her dad. Peeta ends the tale "And right when your song ended, I knew—just like [my dad and] your mother—I was a goner" (301). Playing her part perfectly, it is as if Katniss hears Haymitch's stage-whispered directions, encouraging her to murmur reciprocal phrases to her ersatz Romeo, to initiate a kiss, to win the audience over.

The playacting succeeds: "Our lips have just barely touched when the clunk outside makes us jump" (302). A silver parachute has delivered a basket filled with "a feast—fresh rolls, goat cheese, apples, and best of all, a tureen of that incredible lamb stew on wild rice" (302). The delivered basket announces the success of Katniss's performance, her excellent acting, as she plays the part to the hilt. But an even greater measure of success plays in the girl's imagination as she continues to heed her director's words: "in my head I can hear Haymitch's smug, if slightly exasperated, words, 'Yes, *that's* what I'm looking for sweetheart'" (302). Praise like this—coming as

it does from a Hunger Games winner—is the equal of an Oscar. Further, Katniss’s action can be noted as a milestone on her accelerated pathway from adolescence to young adulthood, marking—as it does—a mature understanding of a complex situation.

Because she has so skillfully manipulated her talents as both an archer and an actress, and because she has played the Hunger Games so successfully as both a skilled woodsman and a star-crossed lover, Katniss is able to place herself in a position where she can play both roles simultaneously, a place from which she can rewrite the history and the rules of the Hunger Games.

The culminating act—the climax of the 74th edition of the Hunger Games—in some ways parallels that of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. But, whereas in Shakespeare’s play a double suicide results from confusion, in the version from an alternate universe with Romeo and Juliet played by adolescents reaped from a poverty-stricken Appalachian-esque district, it’s not so much a matter of honest mistakes as it is malicious Panemian manipulation verbalized as outright lies by the Capitol.

Earlier in the games, playing the star-crossed lovers provoked enough positive audience reaction that the Capitol changed the rules, allowing for two victors so long as they hailed from the same district—an obvious concession to the success of Haymitch’s strategy. However, at the Games’ end, after Katniss and Peeta have outfoxed Foxface, killed Cato and escaped the canine mutations, after the two tributes have successfully played the Games, the Gamemakers command the “voice of the Games Claudius Templesmith to announce: ‘Greetings to the final contestants of the Seventy-fourth Hunger Games. The earlier revision has been revoked’” (342).

Angered but undaunted, the female counterpart to the rebellious Robin Hood, the innocent adolescent who learned to play one of the most love-struck roles ever written for the stage, has a trick up her sleeve: another act of rebellion akin to poaching, to volunteering to replace Prim, to recognizing Rue and District 11. There is a difference in the next action, though, for I believe that it is more calculated, more mature, more adult as it exemplifies the kind of deliberate manipulation that would win the approval of her mentor Haymitch Abernathy.

As is the case with Romeo and Juliet, poison plays a part. Katniss thinks: “If Peeta and I were both to die, or they thought we were. . . .” (344) then there would be no victor, thus defeating a purpose of the Hunger Games. She and Peeta speak without words, silently understanding the meaning of a handful of the “nightlock” (320) berries that killed Foxface, silently communicating that meaning to the Panemian audience watching them on television.

I spread out my fingers, and the dark berries glisten in the sun. I give Peeta’s hand one last squeeze as a signal, as a good-bye, and we begin counting. “One.” Maybe I’m wrong. “Two.” Maybe they don’t care if we both die. “Three!” It’s too late to change my mind. I lift my hand to my mouth, taking one last look at the world. The berries have just passed my lips when the trumpets begin to blare.

The frantic voice of Claudius Templesmith shouts above them. “Stop! Stop! Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to present the victors of the Seventy-fourth Hunger Games, Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark! I give you—the tributes of District Twelve!” (345) And, I give you the observation that history has been rewritten by a rebellious lass who—in this triumphant act—transcends adolescence, entering young adulthood.

From Robin Hood to Juliet we see Katniss Everdeen develop in the Hunger Games. Whether it be in the verdantly Edenic Appalachian woods of District 12 or the booby-trapped stages within the arena of the Hunger Games, this female protagonist personifies an adolescent who incites defiant action while inspiring sympathetic reactions, enabling her to confront a corrupt Capitol and rewrite the history and the rules of the Hunger Games. Initially aligned with Robin Hood with whom she shares a bow, a skill and a rebellious attitude, eventually Katniss Everdeen embraces then moves beyond her inner Juliet as she develops into young adulthood.

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