

Film Review: ‘The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1’ Shouldn’t Have Been Split in Two

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on November 23, 2014 - 8:46pm

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CHICAGO – My issue with the “one movie split into two parts” debate isn’t even about money, which is clearly the main reason why we’ve seen blockbuster films do it like the two-part “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows” and now the two-part “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay”.



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

My beef is the resulting two-hour film that doesn’t have nearly enough meat to even make it to the end of part one because it’s unnaturally stretched out. The film even awkwardly ends in a splice that should wrap itself up now without making fans pay again a year from now.

Anyone who has read these best-selling books by Suzanne Collins knows the source material for this film is weak. A instant complaint with this film is that “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay” no longer has, you know, The Hunger Games going on. Sure, there’s a new story to take its place, but it drags out, limps along and fails to captivate with complicated emotional drama. The film’s previous successes came through action, suspense, a love story and the thrill of the sport.



[Read Adam Fendelman’s full review of “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1”.](#)
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While financially the two-part split will pay off, that doesn’t mean it should have been done at the expense of the film’s contextual demise. A great film is great whether it’s one or two parts, but a weak film split into two for no creative advantage only results in a disappointing artistic decision ruled by greed.

Without the games to glaze our eyes over, “Mockingjay: Part 1” only has the longing between Katniss (Jennifer Lawrence) and Peeta (Josh Hutcherson) to try to win our hearts and make us think. But even their story relies on supporting characters to fill the space between them. Katniss is now protected by and fighting for District 13 among the rebellion while Peeta is brainwashed and bathed in gold by their oppressors in the Capitol.

Their love tries bringing them together, but the Romeo and Juliet story grows tiresome due to the unnatural focus on Katniss. District 13 needs a “Mockingjay” to be a propaganda symbol of hope and fighting back against the Capitol. In this Holocaust-esque environment, she refuses to live with their tyranny and is supposed to inspire an army of others to follow.

“The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1” stars Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, Liam Hemsworth, Woody Harrelson, Elizabeth Banks, Julianne Moore, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Jeffrey Wright, Stanley Tucci, Donald Sutherland, Jena Malone and Sam Claflin from director Francis Lawrence and writers Peter Craig and Danny Strong. The film, which is 123 minutes, is rated “PG-13” for intense sequences of violence and action, some disturbing images and thematic material. It opened wide on Nov. 21, 2014.

★ [Continue for Adam Fendelman’s full review of “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1”.](#) [21]



Jennifer Lawrence stars as Katniss Everdeen in “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1”.

Image credit: Murray Close

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