

## Descendants of Mockingbirds, Mockingjays, Symbolize Rebellion in The Hunger Games

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In Suzanne Collins' Hunger Games trilogy, the fictional mockingjay bird is a powerful symbol of rebellion against the Capitol's oppression. (Source: [Scolastic](#) [1]/Fair Use)

This weekend, the film adaptation of the first book in Suzanne Collins' bestselling Hunger Games Trilogy flew into theaters with tremendous success, making \$155 million [2] in three short days. Though the movie was almost completely true to *The Hunger Games*, the filmmakers chose to omit the history of the mockingjay, the bird donning the trilogy's covers and an important symbol of defiance throughout the series. Here, we provide the history of the mockingjay and its predecessors: the (fictional) jabberjay and the mockingbird.

The mockingjay is the result of genetic experiments conducted on animals by the Capitol — an evil ruling city — during the rebellion against them by the thirteen surrounding districts of the country of Panem. These experiments led to the creation of several weaponized animals, called “muttations” or “mutts.” One such mutt was the jabberjay, which had the ability to memorize and repeat whole human conversations.

“They were homing birds, exclusively male, that were released into regions where the Capitol's enemies were known to be hiding,” narrates the trilogy's heroine, Katniss Everdeen.

While the rebels eventually figured out how private conversations were being transmitted, they “fed the Capitol endless lies, and the joke was on it. So...the birds were abandoned to die off in the wild.”

But evolution took over. The male jabberjays found a suitable mate in female mockingbirds, “creating a whole new species that could replicate both bird whistles and human melodies” but “lost the ability to enunciate words.”

While the nonfiction northern mockingbirds can’t replicate human song, they have been known to mimic birds, other animals, and even human mechanical noises like car alarms. Mockingbirds sing endlessly, sometimes even at night, according to All About Birds [4]. Mockingjays, on the other hand, “could re-create songs. Not just a few notes, but whole songs with multiple verses, if you had the patience to sing them and if they liked your voice,” Katniss says.



Though the Capitol eventually won the rebellion and established the Hunger Games, the mockingjays continued to breed in the wild — a reminder of one Capitol failure. As Katniss puts it, “They’re funny birds and something of a slap in the face to the Capitol.”

Mockingjays from Collins' Hunger Games series descended from mockingbird females mating with male jabberjays, genetically created by the Capitol as weapons against rebels. (Photo: [Wikimedia Commons](#) [3]/Ken Thomas)

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6149536-1"); pageTracker._trackPageview();
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[3] [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Northern\\_Mockingbird\\_USA.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Northern_Mockingbird_USA.jpg)

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