

Millions of Teens Show a Taste for 'The Hunger Games'



AP
Jennifer Lawrence as
Katniss Everdeen in "The
Hunger Games"

JUNE SIMMS: Welcome to AMERICAN MOSAIC in VOA Special English.

(MUSIC)

I'm June Simms. On the program today, we hear about a new album from jazz musician Esperanza Spalding ...

We also talk to a relationship expert ...

But first, a report about a new movie that millions of book fans are hungry for.

(MUSIC)

"The Hunger Games"

JUNE SIMMS: The book "The Hunger Games" became an international best seller following its release in two thousand eight. It was the first in a three-book series.

"The Hunger Games" appeared on the New York Times' Best Sellers list for almost two years. Currently, there are more than twenty-three million copies in

print in the United States alone. Now the book has made into a movie, which opens on Friday. Faith Lapidus has more.

FAITH LAPIDUS: More than fifteen million tickets to "The Hunger Games" were sold before the film even opened. And the ticket sales website, Fandango, says "The Hunger Games" has become its top selling movie opener of all-time. It says that, by the middle of the week, more than two thousand show times were sold out.

AP

Jennifer Lawrence at the world premiere in Los Angeles

The film stars the Oscar nominated actor Jennifer Lawrence as Katniss Everdeen. She lives in a dark future world where some children are forced to kill or be killed in a competition called The Hunger Games. Katniss volunteers to take the place of her younger sister who had been chosen for the deadly event.



KATNISS EVERDEEN (JENNIFER LAWRENCE): "I volunteer! I volunteer as tribute."

GAMES ANNOUNCER: "What did you say to your sister when you volunteered at the reaping?"

KATNISS EVERDEEN: "I told her I would try to win for her."

GAMES ANNOUNCER: "And try you will."

Jennifer Lawrence admits she had some concerns about playing Katniss -- a part she knew would change her life.

JENNIFER LAWRENCE: "She is this incredible character in this incredible story for our generation. Personally, I was nervous because I knew everything would change. I didn't know what would change and if I would like it or dislike it. But, I knew it would never go back to normal."

The actor thinks she will play Katniss in the two other movies planned for "The Hunger Games" series.



AP

Liam Hemsworth plays Gale Hawthorne

Suzanne Collins wrote all three books and the movie version of "The Hunger Games." She recently wrote a letter to readers that appeared on the website of publisher Scholastic. She noted that she is pleased with how the film came out. "I feel like the book and the film are individual yet complementary pieces," she said.

Suzanne Collins also said that movie director Gary Ross was true to the book version. But she said he was also able to provide a rich and powerful new look into the future she created.

(MUSIC)

Relationship Advice Blog

JUNE SIMMS: Debby Rubenfeld has been giving a lot of thought to a couple of people who sent in problems to our relationship blog. Ms. Rubenfeld is a licensed clinical social worker in the Washington, DC area. We spoke with her briefly last week. And today we share more of her guidance for two young women, one an eighteen year old Russian; the other is twenty-five and from Brazil.

Both women reported that their boyfriends were unkind. One wrote that her boyfriend treated her as if she did not matter. The other expressed a sense of being used for sex. She wrote, "My love was trampled under his foot."

Now, both women find it difficult to break away from the former relationships and move forward. Debby Rubenfeld says they need to build belief and trust in themselves.

DEBBY RUBENFELD: "Lingering attachments to unkind men can suggest a lack of confidence in one's own ability to read a situation correctly. It isn't that you aren't reading a situation correctly; it's that you don't trust that you are."

Ms. Rubenfeld says there is a simple way to start to build one's confidence. Try something new.

DEBBY RUBENFELD: "It can be as simple as listening to a new piece of music every day, or trying a new yoga or exercise class; seeing a play. Trying new activities, even once, builds confidence."

More confidence could help these women choose new and healthier relationships.

DEBBY RUBENFELD: "We move toward what we know. So we really have to learn to move toward what we don't know."

But while that advice may be simple, carrying it out is not necessarily easy, especially when emotions are low. Depression can cause a feeling of extreme tiredness, even pain, which makes it harder to get up and out. But, even making a small move could help these two women begin to recover.

DEBBY RUBENFELD: "Physical movement, just moving, opens up different systems in your brain that help to re-regulate you emotionally."

We hope this helps our letter writers from Brazil and Russia. And we hope the two women will let us know of their progress. They, and you, are invited to post to our relationship blog and voaspecialenglish.com. And if you have a relationship problem please send it to mosaic@voaspecialenglish.com. Type relationship in the subject line. And please tell us your age, sex and country.

(MUSIC)

Esperanza Spalding

JUNE SIMMS: The surprise winner last year of the best new artist Grammy has released another record album. "Radio Music Society" is the fourth album from jazz artist Esperanza Spalding. It is the second in a series that began two years ago with "Chamber Music Society." Shirley Griffith has more about the performer and her new album.

SHIRLEY GRIFFITH: Esperanza Spalding does more than play bass. She also is an excellent singer. At the Academy Awards last month, she showed millions just how good she is. She performed during part of the show that honored actors who died in the past year. She performed the classic Louis Armstrong song, "What a Wonderful World."

(MUSIC)

The new album, "Radio Music Society," is part of a series that began with "Chamber Music Society," an album released in twenty-ten.



Esperanza Spalding says the idea for "Radio Music Society" came partly from her concern that too few people are unfamiliar with jazz. She told a reporter that "Radio Music Society" is an attempt to showcase jazz that might get played on the radio. She said people deserve, and want, the chance to hear many kinds of music.

Here she performs "Radio Song," from her new album.

(MUSIC)

Esperanza Spalding helped make music videos for many of the songs on "Radio Music Society." One of them opens with a black father walking his two sons home from school. He discovers that the study of African history and culture at their school is lacking. Here is the song "Black Gold."

(MUSIC)

Esperanza Spalding is from Portland, Oregon. She wrote a song for her hometown. We leave you with "City of Roses" from "Radio Music Society."

(MUSIC)

JUNE SIMMS: I'm June Simms. This program was written and produced by Caty Weaver. Join us again next week for music and more on American Mosaic in VOA Special English.