

BOOK REVIEW

# A LIGHT PICK-ME-UP

NIFATH KARIM CHOWDHURY

British YouTuber, blogger and internet personality Zoe Sugg, better known as "Zoella", released her second novel recently. Titled "Girl Online: On Tour", this is a sequel to her debut novel from last year, "Girl Online."

If you aren't familiar with the first book, then here's what you need to know. The main character is sixteen year-old Penny Porter, a walking-talking definition of a klutz and extremely prone to anxiety attacks. She lives in Brighton with her parents and an older brother, and has a simple life for the most part. During an impromptu trip to New York, she meets Noah, your basic good-looker-with-great-hair. They end up falling in love, but he keeps a large secret from her for most of the time (Spoiler: he's actually a singer-songwriter superstar) which shakes up their relationship quite a bit, but they do manage to patch things up in the end.

The second book starts with a slight time gap since the first— there seems to have been a birthday and a Christmas in the meanwhile, and clearly the long-distance relationship is taking a toll on Penny. However, she has the most exciting summer of her life to look forward to— a two-week trip with Noah and his band as they tour Europe. Her excitement is reflected in her best friend, Elliott, who happens to be a whiz with facts and is constantly bombarding her with interesting tidbits about the places she ought to go

visit. However, their trip does not go as planned— Noah becomes busy with his concerts, and Penny is left alone in hotels for the most part. She is also haunted by an internet predator "TheRealTruth" who threatens to break the couple apart. The only source of comfort Penny has in all this is her blog, where she used to blog publicly as "Girl Online" but now blogs privately as "Girl Offline". Can Penny and Noah tough out this tiring summer? Will TheRealTruth get what they want? Will Penny become "Girl Online" again? To know the answers to these, you'll need to pick up the book.

It's a very simple and easy read. Though it labels itself as a book for young adults, it doesn't quite have the brilliance or complexity of other YA books. The title "On Tour" is also slightly misleading, unless staying inside hotel rooms in different countries counts as being on tour for you. Penny develops slightly more as a character since the first book, but Noah becomes a lot less charming and a lot more annoying. The introduction of a few new characters keeps the story interesting— the bodyguard, Larry, is a personal favourite of mine.

If you're looking for a light-hearted, post-break-up, pick-me-up kind of read, then this might be the book for you.

*Nifath Karim Chowdhury likes to doodle all over her notebooks, textbooks and life. Send her a virtual high-5 at [nifty\\_nicole@live.com](mailto:nifty_nicole@live.com)*



## MOVIE REVIEW

# A Satisfying and Thrilling Final Chapter

SALMA MOHAMMAD ALI

Fans of the dystopian, sci-fi *Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins and/or the movie franchise itself certainly had both doubts and expectations regarding the final instalment - *Mockingjay - Part 2*. Let's start on a positive note: the aforementioned fans will be relieved to know that this film manages to remain truthful to the novel without significantly deviating from the original plot.

The storyline picks up from where Part 1 left off: Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence) is trying to come to terms with the fact that fellow victor, 'fiancé' and trusted friend Peeta Mellark (Josh Hutcherson) just attacked and tried to kill her as a result of President Snow's brainwashing. Katniss now has one more thing to add to the long list of why she wants to bring an end to Snow's tyrannical rule over Panem. Backed by District 13, and their leader, President Alma Coin (Julianne Moore), Katniss sets out on a mission with the 'Star Squad', as the Mockingjay and the face of the rebellion.

The film digs deeper into Katniss' character and her struggles to make her way to the frontlines of every battle in the rebellion. Jennifer's performance can be described as both powerful and vulnerable. She and the remainder of the squad, especially Cressida (Natalie Dormer), Finnick Odair (Sam Claflin) and Gale Hawthorne (Liam Hemsworth) are nothing short of determined and fierce. (Attention *GoT* fans!) Natalie deserves kudos for successfully portraying Cressida's undying dedication to the propos (short propaganda films) which are meant to ignite the rebellion. On a related note, 'Brienne of Tarth' (Gwendoline Christie) also

makes an appearance, as the rebellious Commander Lyme. Similar short appearances are made by Jena Malone (her character Johanna Mason's blunt dialogue providing some humour to balance out all the gloom) and Stanley Tucci (who plays the eccentric Caesar Flickerman) - both characters manage to add depth to the storyline.

Most of the action scenes are facilitated by the Star Squad and are well executed with CGI and sound effects, making this an ideal movie to watch in 3D. Unlike Part 1, this doesn't lack thrilling content, and the eventual action makes up for the rather slow 'dialogue-intensive' beginning of the movie (the 137-minute duration is a tad unnecessarily lengthy). Then there are certain parts that give you rather unrealistic horror movie feels like when Katniss and the others come face to face with the genetically engineered mutts sent by the Capitol. The mutts' appearance doesn't really seem to fit in with the rest of the sci-fi elements and is awfully similar to the creatures in *The Descent* (2006).

If you're familiar with the trilogy, you'll know which deaths to expect (I won't spoil it for those who've skipped the books). Luckily these deaths have the intended effect: momentarily crippling the audience with a sense of sorrow without forcing or overdoing the scenes. *Mockingjay - Part 2* paints an accurate picture of war, rebellion and not always knowing who the real enemy is, all the while providing a thrilling, final ride to its viewers.

*Salma Mohammad Ali fears she is becoming a crazy cat lady and uses writing as a means to grasp on to sanity. Send her your views/hate/love at <https://www.facebook.com/salma.ali209>*

