

Book Club Questions for The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes by Suzanne Collins

1. Throughout the novel, we see Coriolanus Snow's character evolve from a young and ambitious student to a complex and morally ambiguous figure. How did your perception of Coriolanus change as you read the book? Did you sympathize with him at any point?
2. Coriolanus faces several moral dilemmas throughout the story. What were some of the key decisions he had to make? How do you think those choices reflect the moral landscape of the Capitol and the districts?
3. Compare and contrast Coriolanus and Sejanus, focusing on their views of friendship, the Capitol, the districts, and their roles as Peacekeepers. How do their differing perspectives shape their choices throughout the story?
4. Reflect on the unresolved mystery of Lucy Gray's fate. Share your personal theories about what might have happened to her and why you think the author chose to leave her fate uncertain.
5. Discuss the themes of power and control in the novel. How is power wielded by different characters and institutions, such as Dr. Gaul, Coriolanus, and the Capitol itself? What do you think the author is trying to convey about the corrupting influence of power?
6. Discuss Coriolanus's intense aversion to jabberjays and mockingjays. What do you think drives his strong desire to eliminate these creatures, and how does it reflect on his character?
7. Explore Lucy Gray's connection to snakes throughout the story. What symbolism do you associate with her interactions with snakes, from her reaping day to her encounters in the arena and her final moments with Coriolanus?
8. Compare and contrast life in the Capitol with life in the districts. How does the stark contrast between these two settings contribute to the overall themes of the story? In what ways does the Capitol maintain its control over the districts?
9. Lucy Gray is a complex character who defies easy categorization. How would you describe her personality and motivations? What role does she play in Coriolanus's transformation, and how does she challenge his worldview?
10. The novel is rich in symbolism, from the mockingjays to the roses. What do these symbols represent, and how do they contribute to the overall narrative? Are there any other symbols you noticed that held significance?
11. Lucy Gray's and Coriolanus's different backgrounds and the challenges they face, do you believe their love for each other is mutual and genuine? Why or why not?

12. Consider the moral dilemmas presented by Coriolanus's actions, such as providing Lucy Gray with the compact and placing her scent-soaked handkerchief in the snake tank. In an arena with blurred ethical lines, what standards, if any, should apply? What do you think is at stake in these situations?
13. Coriolanus's desire for success and recognition drives much of his actions. Do you think his ambition is justified given his circumstances, or does it lead him down a dark path? How does his ambition compare to the ambitions of other characters, such as Sejanus or Lucy Gray?
14. Entertainment, including the Hunger Games themselves, plays a crucial role in the Capitol's control over the districts. How does the novel explore the idea of using entertainment as a tool of manipulation and distraction? Are there parallels to our own world?
15. How did one of the epigraphs at the start of the novel resonate with you, and how do you think it influenced your perception of a character or event in the story?
16. How do you feel about the way Capitol's actions in the book disregard the social contract and the common good? Are there any real-world parallels that come to mind?
17. Dr. Gaul encourages Coriolanus to contemplate the true purpose of the Hunger Games. What are your thoughts on the multifaceted roles these Games serve in the story, and how do they relate to societal values and norms in our own world?
18. Analyze Coriolanus's decision to poison Dean Highbottom's morphling bottle in the conclusion of the novel. How do you personally interpret his motivations and the consequences of this act?
19. In "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," we witness the early stages of what will become the Hunger Games as we know them. How did the evolution of the Hunger Games in this prequel affect your understanding of the Games as portrayed in the original trilogy? Were there any surprising revelations about their origins?
20. What ethical questions or dilemmas did the story raise for you as a reader? Were there moments where you found yourself questioning the characters' actions or the morality of the Capitol's society?
21. Without giving away any spoilers, what are your thoughts on the ending of the novel? Were you satisfied with how the story concluded? Did it leave you with lingering questions or reflections?