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**EXCERPT FROM *The Hunger Games Special Edition* by Suzanne Collins
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On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the publication of *The Hunger Games*, author Suzanne Collins and publisher David Levithan discussed the evolution of the story, the editorial process, and the first ten years of the life of the trilogy, encompassing both books and films. The following is an excerpt from their written conversation.

DL: Another key piece of *The Hunger Games* is the voice and perspective that Katniss brings to it. I know some novelists start with a character and then find a story through that character, but with *The Hunger Games* (and correct me if I'm wrong) I believe you had the idea for the story first, and then Katniss stepped into it. Where did she come from? I'd love for you to talk about the origin of her name, and also the origin of her very distinctive voice.

SC: Katniss appeared almost immediately after I had the idea, standing by the bed with that bow and arrow. I'd spent a lot of time during *The Underland Chronicles* weighing the attributes of different weapons. I used archers very sparingly because they required light and the Underland has little natural illumination. But a bow and arrow can be handmade, shot from a distance, and weaponized when the story transitions into warfare. She was a born archer.

Her name came later, while I was researching survival training and specifically edible plants. In one of my books, I found the arrowhead plant, and the more I read about it, the more it seemed to reflect her. Its Latin name has the same roots as Sagittarius, the archer. The edible tuber roots she could gather, the arrowhead-shaped leaves were her defense, and the little white blossoms kept it in the tradition of flower names, like Rue and Primrose. I looked at the list of alternative names for it. *Swamp Potato. Duck Potato. Katniss* easily won the day.

As to her voice, I hadn't intended to write in first person. I thought the book would be in the third person like *The Underland Chronicles*. Then I sat down to work and the first page poured out in first person, like she was saying, "Step aside, this is my story to tell." So I let her.