

## **Focus on the Short Story “*The Survivor*” in THE GRAND SEDUCTION**

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**The Survivor** by Walter P. Moudy (Control click on the title to read the story.)

### **What's it about?**

Written in 1965 by Walter F. Moudy, *The Survivor* is set during the 2050 Olympic War Games between the US and Russia. The games are designed to make clear the horrors of war to the public, and are therefore televised. It's uncanny portrayal of reality TV echoes the reality TV we now know. Remember, this was written nearly half a century before our currently popular reality TV shows.

One hundred soldiers on each side, armed to the teeth, are placed in a large camera-laced arena with battlefield terrain such as forests, hills and a lake, and must fight it out until all of one side is killed. The survivors are hailed as heroes, and the loser pays restitution to the winner.

The commentators use colourful commentary, closeups, and treat the game like a sporting event. Below is an excerpt from the story:

"Wait a minute, folks. He's been hit! He's down! The runner has been shot. You saw it here, folks. Brilliant camera work. Simply great. John, how about that?"

"Simply tremendous, Bill. A really great shot. Ed, can we back the cameras up and show the folks that action again? Here it is in slow motion, folks. Now you see him ... here he is, folks, Private Ted Krogan from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Here he is coming around the last clump of bushes—now watch this, folks—he gets about half way across the clearing —and there it is, folks, you can actually see the bullet strike his throat—a direct hit. Watch this camera close up of his face, you'll see him die in front of your eyes. And there he goes—he rolls over and not a move. He was dead before he hit the ground. Bill, did any of our cameras catch where that shot came from?"

### **How is it like *The Hunger Games*?**

- Both feature a televised fight to the death game.
- The winner has a difficult time going back to his pre-game life.

### Questions after reading "The Survivor":

1. What are the similarities between Private Starbuck's feelings about war and his weapon and the comments from those who have chosen to go to war in the gallery in Unit 5?
2. What is the purpose of these US – Russian Olympic Games?
3. Explain the training.
4. What reward is bestowed upon *the survivor*?
5. What are the rules of "the game"?
6. How is Starbuck surprised by his first day and night in "the game"?
7. What does Starbuck learn is the "decisive factor" in a battle?
8. What is the flaw in the reasoning behind using these games to replace war?