

# **The Merit Prize of English Section**

## **Senior Division**

**Name of Winner** : Nimra  
**Name of School** : St. Margaret's Girls' College,  
Hong Kong  
**Book Title** : The Hunger Games  
**Author** : Suzanne Collins  
**Publisher** : Scholastic Press

‘The Hunger Games’, an intriguing and thought-provoking book has won the hearts of many due to its remarkable and noteworthy storyline. This book is about a passionate and vehement young girl called Katniss Everdeen. Her beloved father drew his last breath in a mine explosion and it was the dawn of a privation and sorrowful life for Katniss, her mother and her younger sister. In spite of that catastrophic and calamitous event, she never

abandoned hope but fought tooth and nail so as to have a rosy future ahead. The story starts from the day of the reaping when the tributes are selected to associate themselves to the Hunger Games. The Hunger Games are an annual televised event in which the cold-hearted and merciless Capitol selects a boy and a girl from each of the twelve districts, and they are forced to fight one another to the death. The victor is then showered with fame and wealth, and can get a chance to embrace the people of their district again after going through a long vicissitude. When Katniss's sister was chosen as the district's female tribute, she had the ground taken from her feet and without further ado, she volunteered to take her sister's place. The male tribute selected was Peeta Mellark who caused Katniss to take a stroll down memory lane about how Peeta gave her bread from the bakery when she was searching for food for

her family in the garbage. After overcoming all the obstacles and the stumbling block, both Katniss and Peeta managed to survive and were crowned the winner of the Hunger games, and returned to their district.

The main theme of the book is friendship and family. Friendship is beheld in a profusion of ways throughout the novel. Katniss has two foremost friendships. One is with Gale who vowed to stand by her through thick and thin and buttressed her to survive in a wearisome world. The other was with Peeta which was formed when he gave her bread when they were young. Peeta was an irreplaceable friend and ally through the mayhem and tragedy of the Hunger Games. He was always by her side whenever she was in an abyss of despair. Moreover, Katniss's family was what kept her going through the jeopardy of the arena. She knew that

her death would drive her mother and sister to anxiety and depression, and lock them in some dark world of dullness. Her love and affection for her sister buoys her. On the other hand, Gale was also inspired by his family to hunt and remain in the district despite his dream of living in utopia. In every part of the book, family was a prominent factor that helps people for survival.

Nevertheless, inequality between rich and poor and the importance of appearance are also the crucial themes of the book. In Panem, wealth is excessively concentrated in the hands of the rich. Disparity was divulged in a plethora of ways throughout the novel. People of the poor districts did not even have food to eat. This can be seen in the novel as Katniss had to illegally hunt in the woods beyond the district's borders in order to fulfill the stomach of her

mother and young sister back home. Furthermore, the delicious and mouth-watering food provided in the Capitol was a feast for Katniss's eyes and it was the first time for her to try the hot chocolate in her entire life. As a matter of fact, the way the tributes are selected for the games is the vivid example of inequality between rich and poor. At the first glance, the reaping through which tributes are chosen is unmethodical and anyone can be selected, at a closer look, it reveals a different picture as the underprivileged has a higher possibility of ending up as tributes than the people of a higher social status. It is a glory for the high-flying people to be a competitor in the Games while for the poverty-stricken tributes, it is essentially a death sentence. Throughout the book, the readers were able to witness how Katniss and the other tributes utilized their external appearance to change the perceptions of people towards

them. For instance, Katniss would never shed a tear in front of the camera even though she was in great pain and her body was racking with sobs. She knew that it is important to put on a tough front so that she would not be an easy target for the other tributes and the public.

The motifs in the book are fire and hunting. Fire plays a volley of important roles throughout the book. Most of the designs of Katniss's outfits were related to fire. Her talented and polished designer Cinna would design her extraordinary and impressive outfits in relation to the element fire. Her very first dress in the Games was covered in synthetic flames and fire was also used in her other outfits. This was why she was named 'the girl who was on fire'. The very word fire was used to symbolize and value Katniss's keen determination and spirit throughout the

games. Hunting was put under spotlight numerous times all through the book as hunting was an integral part of Katniss's life. Her professionalism and dynamism of hunting has always been greeted with applause. She has been hunting with her friend Gale after the demise of her beloved father so as to financially and emotionally support her mother and sister. Moreover hunting also enabled her to stay alive throughout the Games whenever she was unable to find food. After the games, she even realized that killing a human in competition is far more traumatizing, miserable and inhumane than to hunt an animal for food in the woods.

The scene that warmed my heart the most throughout the book was the last scene in which both Katniss and Peeta defeated all the tribute and were reluctant to kill each other. Neither Katniss nor Peeta was willing to kill the other so

Katniss took out the poisonous berries as she believed that it was better to end her own life than to kill a friend who has been with her through all the glitz and glamour. To their astonishment, the announcer raised his voice and asked them to stop, and they both were announced the winners. This was the point where Katniss and Peeta's friendship attained its greatest noteworthiness. My ideal character through the book is Katniss. She is embraced by many due to her resilient façade and ambiguous vulnerability that makes her enchanting to readers. She navigates the trials in her life with integrity and morality, and is loyal to family and friends. Katniss also used her courageous nature to be a catalyst for all the changes required in her world. Her sense of affiliation and belonging to her mother land is highly commendable as she had pay strenuous effort just to make the people of her district lift their head with fame.

This book is extremely meaningful and thought-provoking. It can teach us to handle all the obstacles in life with courage as in the book Katniss never conceded defeat but endeavor to succeed despite all the problems life throws her way. This book also thought us that life is a roller coaster and there are times when we feel down. On a more positive note, it is essential to see everything through rose-coloured spectacles if we want to overcome hardship. Moreover, time can whirl past in a blink of an eye so we should live our life to the fullest and strive for the best in everything we do as Katniss was also tenacious throughout the Games and did not fear failure. Her attitude can inspire all of us to change our narrow-mindedness of believing failure is a converse of success. Failure is never the converse of success, indeed it is a prominent proportion of success. Failure is usually a blessing in disguise as we

would be able to train ourselves to be more resilient and tenacious. We always have to work hard and put extra efforts in all our doings as we would always reap what we sow. This book even stimulates all the people around the world to fight tooth and nail to make poverty history and give peace a chance. After reading this enlightening book, everyone would be able to experience how the poor feel and know the importance of diminishing the disparity between the rich and the poor.

This book is embraced by many due to its unique and soul-wrenching storyline, tenacious characters and motivating message. There are a number of useful and meaningful quotes used in the book which can further enrich and brighten the storyline. The quotes include ‘You never forget the face of the person who was your last hope’,

‘May the odds be ever in your favour’ and ‘Hope is the only thing that is stronger than fear’. These worthy quotes can immensely draw the attention of the reader and enable them to get indulged into the book.