

Extract from: 'The Hunger Games' Chapter 3

nose. Crying is not an option. There will be more cameras at the train station.

My sister and my mother come first. I reach out to Prim and she climbs on my lap, her arms around my neck, head on my shoulder, just like she did when she was a toddler. My mother sits beside me and wraps her arms around us. For a few minutes, we say nothing. Then I start telling them all the things they must remember to do, now that I will not be there to do them for them.

Prim is not to take any tesserae. They can get by, if they're careful, on selling Prim's goat's milk and cheese and the small apothecary business my mother now runs for the people in the Seam. Gale will get her the herbs she doesn't grow herself, but she must be very careful to describe them because he's not as familiar with them as I am. He'll also bring them game – he and I made a pact about this a year or so ago – and will probably not ask for compensation, but they should thank him with some kind of trade, like milk or medicine.

I don't bother suggesting Prim learns to hunt. I tried to teach her a couple of times and it was disastrous. The woods terrified her, and whenever I shot something, she'd get teary and talk about how we might be able to heal it if we got it home soon enough.

42

But she does well with her goat, so I concentrate on that.

When I am done with instructions about fuel, and trading, and staying in school, I turn to my mother and grip her arm, hard. "Listen to me. Are you listening to me?" She nods, alarmed by my intensity. She must know what's coming. "You can't leave again," I say.

My mother's eyes find the floor. "I know. I won't. I couldn't help what—"

"Well, you have to help it this time. You can't clock out and leave Prim on her own. There's no me now to keep you both alive. It doesn't matter what happens. Whatever you see on the screen. You have to promise me you'll fight through it!" My voice has risen to a shout. In it is all the anger, all the fear I felt at her abandonment.

She pulls her arm from my grasp, moved to anger herself now. "I was ill. I could have treated myself if I'd had the medicine I have now."

That part about her being ill might be true. I've seen her bring back people suffering from immobilizing sadness since. Perhaps it is a sickness, but it's one we can't afford.

"Then take it. And take care of her!" I say.

"I'll be all right, Katniss," says Prim, clasping my

43

face in her hands. "But you have to take care, too. You're so fast and brave. Maybe you can win."

I can't win. Prim must know that in her heart. The competition will be far beyond my abilities. Kids from wealthier districts, where winning is a huge honour, who've been trained their whole lives for this. Boys who are two to three times my size. Girls who know twenty different ways to kill you with a knife. Oh, there'll be people like me, too. People to weed out before the real fun begins.

"Maybe," I say, because I can hardly tell my mother to carry on if I've already given up myself. Besides, it isn't in my nature to go down without a fight, even when things seem insurmountable. "Then we'd be as rich as Haymitch."

"I don't care if we're rich. I just want you to come home. You will try, won't you? Really, really try?" asks Prim.

"Really, really try. I swear it," I say. And I know, because of Prim, I'll have to.

And then the Peacekeeper is at the door, signalling our time is up, and we're all hugging one another so hard it hurts and all I'm saying is, "I love you. I love you both." And they're saying it back and then the Peacekeeper orders them out and the door closes. I bury my head in one of the velvet pillows as if this can block the whole thing out.

44

"Listen," he says. "Getting a knife should be pretty easy, but you've got to get your hands on a bow. That's your best chance."

"They don't always have bows," I say, thinking of the year there were only horrible spiked maces that the tributes had to bludgeon one another to death with.

"Then make one," says Gale. "Even a weak bow is better than no bow at all."

I have tried copying my father's bows, with poor results. It's not that easy. Even he had to scrap his own work sometimes.

"I don't even know if there'll be wood," I say. Another year, they tossed everybody into a landscape of nothing but boulders and sand and scruffy bushes. I particularly hated that year. Many contestants were bitten by venomous snakes or went insane from thirst.

"There's almost always some wood," Gale says. "Since that year half of them died of cold. Not much entertainment in that."

It's true. We spent one Hunger Games watching the players freeze to death at night. You could hardly see them because they were just huddled in balls and had no wood for fires or torches or anything. It was considered very anticlimactic in the Capitol, all those quiet, bloodless deaths. Since then, there's usually been wood to make fires.

"Yes, there's usually some," I say.

"Katniss, it's just hunting. You're the best hunter I know," says Gale.

"It's not just hunting. They're armed. They think," I say.

"So do you. And you've had more practice. Real practice," he says. "You know how to kill."

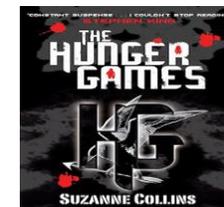
"Not people," I say.

"How different can it be, really?" says Gale grimly.

The awful thing is that if I can forget they're people, it will be no different at all.

The Peacekeepers are back too soon and Gale asks for more time, but they're taking him away and I start to panic. "Don't let them starve!" I cry out, clinging to his hand.

"I won't! You know I won't! Katniss, remember I—" he says, and they yank us apart and slam the door and I'll never know what it was he wanted me to remember.



Task: Listen to chapter 3 of 'The Hunger Games. The questions and extract all relate to Katniss saying goodbye to her loved one.

- 1) Read the extracts carefully and highlight key information.
- 2) Skim and scan the text to retrieve the answers to the questions.
- 3) Use words from the texts to record your answers to the questions.

1	Who comes to say goodbye to Katniss first?	
2	What does Katniss tell Prim to sell?	
3	Who will get the herbs for Katniss's mother's apothecary?	
4	Does Katniss tell Prim to learn to hunt?	
5	What does Katniss tell her mother NOT to do?	
6	List 2 reasons why Katniss thinks she can't win the Hunger Games.	
7	Who does Prim think they could be as rich as, if Katniss wins the Hunger Games?	
8	Who orders Prim and her mother away from Katniss?	
9	What does Katniss say as her mother and Prim are leaving?	
10	What does Katniss bury her head in, after her mother and Prim have left the room?	
11	What does Gale tell Katniss to try and get hold of?	
12	When Katniss tried making her father's bows, what were the results like?	
13	What happened to the contestants in the Hunger Games which took place in a 'Landscape of nothing but boulders and sand and scruffy bushes'?	
14	Why does Gale think that Katniss could do well in the hunger games?	
15	What does Katniss cry out to Gale as he's being taken away by the Peacekeepers?	