



THE HUNGER GAMES: DISCUSSION GUIDE #4



CHAPTERS 14–16

Comprehension:

- What is Katniss's first sponsor gift? Why is Katniss so impressed by it?

The first sponsor gift Katniss receives is a pot of medicated ointment for Katniss's burns. The medicine eases the pain and helps heal Katniss's skin. Katniss knows this must be high-tech medicine created in the Capitol and that it must be very expensive, meaning multiple people have contributed money to send it to her.

- How does Katniss escape from the tributes camping out under her tree?

She saws off a branch where a tracker jacker nest is located. It bursts as it hits the ground, causing the tracker jackers to follow the tributes who run to the lake. Katniss runs in the opposite direction once she gets down from the tree.

- Why does Katniss want Rue as an ally? What skills does Rue have, and how have they helped her so far?

Katniss wants Rue as an ally because she's a survivor, she trusts her, and she reminds Katniss of her sister, Prim. Rue saved Katniss by alerting her to the tracker jacker nest. Rue is clever and can move silently through the woods, jumping from treetop to treetop. She knows how to treat tracker jacker stings and is familiar with a number of edible plants in the arena.

- What surprising facts about District Eleven does Katniss learn from Rue? Why does this surprise her?

Rue tells Katniss that the citizens of District Eleven aren't allowed to eat the crops that they grow. The punishment is a public whipping, and the mayor is very strict about it. Katniss infers that whippings are a regular occurrence in District Eleven, which is surprising to Katniss because the mayor and peacekeepers in District Twelve are more lax about the rules.

- Explain Katniss's plan to eliminate the Careers' supplies. How is this different from her previous plans in the Games?

Katniss plans to lead the Careers away from their base camp at the lake by having Rue light fires that will create a lot of smoke. Then, she will find a way to destroy all of their supplies. This plan is different because it "isn't motivated by the need for flight and evasion." It's an offensive plan rather than a defensive one.

- How do mockingjays play into Rue and Katniss's alliance and plan?

Rue has a special relationship with mockingjays back in District 11, so the mockingjay pin is how Rue decides she can trust Katniss. Once they begin the plan and are separated, Rue and Katniss will sing a specific tune to signal to each other that they're okay, and the mockingjays will carry the tune through the woods.



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CHAPTERS 14–16

- How are the Careers' supplies protected? How does Katniss destroy them?

The boy from District Three reuses the landmines from around the starting plates and buries them around the stockpile of supplies. If another tribute who doesn't know where the mines are tries to get to the pile, they will be blown up. Katniss shoots a bag of apples, which triggers the landmines to explode, destroying all of the Careers' food.

Analysis:

- How do tracker jackers and other *muttations* fit into the theme of dystopia? Cite evidence from the novel to support your answer.

Muttations like tracker jackers and jabberjays fit into the theme of dystopia because they are genetically altered animals created by the government for the purpose of controlling citizens. After the rebellion ended, the Capitol destroyed all of the tracker jacker nests around the Capitol, but left the nests around the districts. This was meant to remind the districts of their weakness against the Capitol's power.

- How does getting the bow and arrows affect Katniss's outlook on the Games?

Once she has the bow and arrows, Katniss feels more confident about her ability to survive. She knows her skills with a bow and arrow will help her in the arena. She no longer feels like prey having to run and hide, but a contender who can stay and fight.

- Why does Katniss think her conversation with Rue is likely being censored? How does this fit into the theme of dystopia?

Even though the information seems harmless, the Capitol doesn't "want people in different districts to know about one another." This is further evidence that Panem is a dystopian society, because citizens aren't allowed to travel or communicate with others outside their own district, which keeps them isolated and less likely to rebel.

- What is one surprising advantage that Katniss and Rue have over the Career Tributes? How does this fit into the theme of survival?

Katniss and Rue "know how to be hungry" because they are accustomed to never having enough food back home. The Careers have always had enough to eat, which is a disadvantage in the Games if they don't have access to the food provided in the Cornucopia. Even though the Careers are stronger and better fed, they don't have the same types of survival skills that Katniss and Rue have, which makes Katniss and Rue more likely to survive without resources from the Gamemakers.

Personal:

- Even though Rue has a hard life in District Eleven, she tells Katniss that the thing she loves most in the world is music. What is the thing you love most? Why? **Student answers will vary.**



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CHAPTERS 17–18

Comprehension:

- How does the explosion affect Katniss, both physically and mentally?

Katniss becomes extremely dizzy and disoriented, and her hearing is damaged—perhaps permanently—as a result of the explosion. Even though she’s glad that she destroyed the Careers’ food, she feels weak and vulnerable without her full hearing.

- What is a “hollow day,” and why is it called that?

In District Twelve, a “hollow day” is a day when you never feel satisfied, no matter how much you eat. It’s likely called that because of the hollow feeling in a person’s stomach when they’re hungry. It might also be an ironic play on the word “holiday,” which is a time for celebration and often involves feasting.

- Aside from the other tributes, what other possible dangers does Katniss face in the arena?

Other dangers she might face include dehydration, starvation, hypothermia, injury, infection, and animal predators.

- What does Katniss do to honor Rue? What is the deeper purpose?

Katniss collects wildflowers and places them around Rue so that it looks like she might just be sleeping peacefully. She wants everyone watching to see Rue as an innocent victim of the Capitol’s cruelty, and she wants to show the Capitol that Rue was more than a piece in their Games.

- What is the second sponsor gift that Katniss receives, and who is it from? Why did she receive this gift?

Katniss receives a loaf of bread from the people in District Eleven. She received this gift because of her alliance with Rue and the way she honored Rue after her death.

- Explain the rule change announced at the end of Chapter 18. What does this mean for the characters?

Why do you think the Gamemakers announced this rule change?

The Gamemakers announce that there may be two winners of this year’s Hunger Games if both tributes are from the same district. This means that Katniss and Peeta can both go home as winners. The Gamemakers probably know that the “star-crossed lovers” from District Twelve are popular with the Capitol audience, and this rule change is a way to make the Games more interesting.



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CHAPTERS 17–18

Analysis:

- In Chapter 16, Rue tells Katniss that she loves music. Katniss admits to herself that she ranks music “somewhere between hair ribbons and rainbows in terms of usefulness.” But then, when Rue asks Katniss to sing to her as she’s dying, Katniss admits, “There was once music in my house, too. Music that I helped make.” What do these two scenes reveal about Katniss?

These scenes reveal that Katniss has changed since her dad died. She used to sing with him, which is why she remembers the song for Rue. But she stopped singing after he died and had to focus solely on survival and protecting Prim and their mother. These scenes imply that Katniss used to be more carefree and happy, but she has had to be strong and hard-hearted for her family.

- In what ways is Rue’s death a turning point for Katniss? Why do you think this event sparked this change for her? Cite evidence from the story to support your answer.

Rue’s death “forced [Katniss] to confront [her] own fury against the cruelty, the injustice” the Capitol inflicts upon her and all of the other citizens in the districts. Katniss wasn’t able to protect Rue in the arena, which makes her think of her inability to protect Prim back in District Twelve. She even slips up and thinks “if this is Prim’s, I mean Rue’s last request” before she sings to Rue. Katniss recalls Peeta’s words the night before the Games and decides that she wants to “shame [the Capitol], to make them accountable,” which is why she decides to lay out the flowers for Rue.

- How does Suzanne Collins “show not tell” the reader about Katniss’s grief after Rue’s death? Cite specific parts of the story and explain how they show Katniss’s grief.

“The brief sense of home I had that one night with Rue has vanished. My feet wander this way and that until sunset. I’m not afraid, not even watchful.” This shows that Katniss feels numb and directionless.

“I climb dangerously high into a tree, not for safety, but to get as far away from today as I can.” This shows that Katniss is trying to physically and emotionally separate herself from the horror of the day.

“Sometimes when things are particularly bad, my brain will give me a happy dream. . . . When I fully awake, I’m momentarily comforted. . . . but it quickly slips away, leaving me sadder and lonelier than ever.” This acknowledges that Katniss’s mind is in a bad state, and even though sleep was a brief escape, she’s even sadder than before.

Other words like “despondency” and “lethargy” show that Katniss is too tired and grief-stricken to be motivated by anything in the Games.



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- What other plot events are put in motion as a result of Katniss destroying the Careers' supplies?

Since Katniss destroyed the Careers' food and supplies, they are more vulnerable, but also more angry. The boy from District One captures and kills Rue, who helped Katniss set the fires as a distraction. His killing Rue causes Katniss to face her anger and begin her rebellion against the Gamemakers and the Capitol.

Personal:

- How does one stay true to oneself in an oppressive society? Give some examples of people, either real or fictional, who have remained true to themselves despite the darkness around them.

Student answers will vary.