Survival: A Formal Essay
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In a game where life is at stake and a person must compete as an individual for survival is it possible to survive with no help from others? In the book *The Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins, the main character Katniss Everdeen is put to the challenge of competing against 23 other girls and boys to the death. This is not the only time Katniss has had to fend for herself, as at home she had to care for her family and keep them alive as well as herself. In this novel Katniss finds that the individual survives only when dependant on someone else for something. This theme is presented through Katniss' alliance with Rue, her relationship with Peeta during the games, her relationship with her mentor Haymitch, and her hunting partnership with Gale before the games.

Survival would have been impossible for Katniss without depending on someone else, as was seen in Katniss' alliance with Rue during the games. This alliance was the difference between life and death. Katniss, who was trapped in a tree above her opponents who had a stockpile of weapons, knew that survival was made necessary by her dependence on Rue. "If she'd wanted me dead, all she would have had to do was disappear from that tree without pointing out the tracker jacker nest" (208). This shows that Katniss can only survive with a dependence on someone because when there is help and support from someone else it is easier to come up with better plans and get out of bad situations, which was shown when Katniss took a little help of Rue's knowledge to point out something that went unseen to Katniss. Also, Katniss showed not only that an individual can't survive without depending on someone else for something, but they can also be the person that returns the favour and is being depended on. The alliance with Rue worked both ways, as Rue and Katniss decided to share and divide the food that they had gained. Katniss shows this mutual understanding stating, "Before I leave I make sure Rue's well stocked with food and matches" (213). Without this food being divided Katniss or Rue most definitely would have perished, but the kindness and generosity of both individuals helped immensely. The final way in which Rue's alliance with Katniss proves the importance of depending on someone to survive was in the comfort that Rue provided to Katniss. Without this much-needed comfort which reminded Katniss of her sister Prim there would never have been the reminder of home, which in turn made Katniss work harder to get home to Prim. "But I want Rue as an ally because she is a survivor, and I trust her, and why not admit it? She reminds me of Prim" (201). Without this comfort provided by little Rue, Katniss would have been less likely to survive and Katniss would have more likely given up.

Dependence was key to Katniss' survival and was illustrated through Katniss' relationship with Peeta. Peeta, who was another competitor in the games, was from the same district as Katniss and was Katniss' training partner. Peeta showed a devotion to Katniss throughout the entire competition. Without a strong unknowing dependence for Peeta, Katniss would have been unable to survive. This was shown when Peeta convinced the careers to wait underneath the tree Katniss was located in instead of trying to kill the individual right away. "Finally I hear Peeta say harshly 'Oh let her stay up there. It's not like she's going anywhere. We'll deal with her in the morning'" (183). Without this dependence on Peeta's bravery and inside knowledge of the career tribe then Katniss wouldn't have been spared time to formulate a plan to escape successfully from surviving sheer death. Katniss also depended on Peeta for survival when Peeta had saved Katniss from Cato. Peeta risked his life and his alliance with the careers to help hide Katniss, who was incapable of doing anything due to the effects of the tracker jacker bee stings. "Sick and disoriented, I'm able to form only one thought: *Peeta Mellark just saved my life*" (194). What this means is that Katniss only survived through these tough times because of Peeta and Katniss openly acknowledges it. Without this dependence, there would have been no possibility of survival.

During *The Hunger Games* another person that Katniss depended on for survival was the girl's mentor Haymitch. An example of how he contributed to Katniss' survival was when he gathered wealthy sponsors to send her much needed supplies like medicine for burns, or food. "You have good sponsors she says longingly" (201). Rue states how good Katniss' sponsors have been to her, and without Haymitch these sponsors and their gifts would never have been sent to her, as without Haymitch's hard work at rallying up supplies Katniss would not have been able to heal and move forward in the game. Another way that Katniss' survival is helped through dependence for Haymitch was when Haymitch sent important messages to Katniss. Katniss used her own personal knowledge of Haymitch and tried to understand what type of message he might be sending to her with each move that was made. "*Maybe he is sending me a message.* Then I know, there is only one reason Haymitch is withholding water from me. Because he knows I've almost found it" (169). What this quote means is that Katniss assumed that Haymitch was sending a message based on what was learned from him during the time where Haymitch was a mentor. This type of dependence worked masterfully for Katniss, as when no water was sent to her, she only assumed based on the knowledge of Haymitch that it was somewhere close, and the water was in fact quite close which saved Katniss from sheer death. Without a being able to think like the mentor Haymitch, Katniss would most definitely have been unable to survive.

The character Gale is another good example of how Katniss cannot survive on her own. Gale, who was Katniss' hunting buddy, provided the skill of trapping animals and setting up snares. "Good hunting partners are hard to find" (10). Katniss feels that Gale is a special hunting partner, and it shows that Katniss openly acknowledges that Gale is a one of a kind that is depended on dearly for her survival. Without depending on Gale for his knowledge of hunting strategies Katniss would never have been able to provide for her family and Katniss wouldn't have been

able to catch game so easily during *The Hunger Games*. Also Gale helped by not only continually testing and improving Katniss' hunting skills, but also splitting the amount of game which was caught and splitting the compensation. "Gale and I divide our spoils" (14). Without the dependence for Gale to split up the food that was caught, then Katniss would have caught fewer animals, received less money through trade, and therefore starved along with her family. Although Gale sat at the sidelines during the games, Katniss' dependence for him in everyday life was integral to her survival.

To conclude, in order to survive in a competition like *The Hunger Games* where life is at stake and a person must compete as an individual it is vital to have dependence on someone else. This is most definitely illustrated by Katniss who places dependence on alliances and relationships in order to stay alive both at home and inside of the games. Although every individual was forced to compete with one another to survive, dependence ultimately won out as Katniss successfully used her dependence on characters like Rue, Peeta, Gale, Haymitch, and other to stay alive and eventually win *The Hunger Games*.

Works Cited

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. New York: Scholastic, 2008. Print.