

## C Fighting to survive

Sixty seconds. That's how long we're required to stand on our metal circles before the sound of a gong releases us. Step off before the minute is up, and land mines blow your legs off. Sixty seconds to take in the ring of tributes all equidistant from the Cornucopia, a giant golden horn shaped like a cone with a curved tail, the mouth of which is at least twenty feet high, spilling over with the things that will give us life here in the arena. Food, containers of water, weapons, medicine, garments, fire starters. Strwn around the Cornucopia are other supplies, their value decreasing the farther they are from the horn. [...]

But then the question is how quickly can I get out of there? By the time I've scrambled up the packs and grabbed the weapons, others will have reached the horn, and one or two I might be able to pick off, but say there's a dozen, at that close range, they could take me down with the spears<sup>1</sup> and the clubs<sup>2</sup>. Or their own powerful fists. Still, I won't be the only target<sup>3</sup>. I'm betting many of the other tributes would pass up a smaller girl, even one who scored an eleven in training, to take out their more fierce adversaries. [...]

A boy, I think from District 9, reaches the pack at the same time I do and for a brief time we grapple for it and then he coughs<sup>4</sup>, splattering my face with blood. I stagger back, repulsed by the warm, sticky spray. Then the boy slips to the ground. That's when I see the knife in his back. Already other tributes have reached the Cornucopia and are spreading out to attack. Yes, the girl from District 2, ten yards away, running toward me, one hand clutching a half-dozen knives. I've seen her throw in training. She never misses. And I'm her next target.

All the general fear I've been feeling condenses into an immediate fear of this girl, this predator who might kill me in seconds. Adrenaline shoots through me and I sling the pack over one shoulder and run full-speed for the woods. I can hear the blade whistling toward me and reflexively hike the pack up to protect my head. The blade lodges in the pack. Both straps on my shoulders now, I make for the trees. Somehow I know the girl will not pursue me. That she'll be drawn back into the Cornucopia before all the good stuff is gone. A grin<sup>5</sup> crosses my face. Thanks for the knife, I think.

Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 2008.

1. lances - 2. bâtons - 3. cible - 4. tousser - 5. sourire



### Read and write

1. What special moment is described here?
2. How prepared is the heroine for the challenge?
3. Explain 'Thanks for the knife' (line 33).

### VIDEO Watch and write

4. Comment on the choice of colours and music.
5. What elements of the book are not visible in the movie?
6. Is the story told from the same point of view?
7. Movie or book? Which has the strongest impact on you? Give your opinion.

### Toolbox

- countdown: *compte à rebours*
- decisive moment = *crucial moment*
- tension = *suspense*
- take in = *understand*
- stab = *attack someone with a knife*
- run for your life = *run and hide not to be killed*
- prey upon = *hunt like a predator*

### Notion recap

**BAC** → p. 78

1. What do dystopias say about our society?