

Champion of our World

By: Gabrielle Wong

Fellow classmates,

It has been said that "grown-ups are complicated creatures, full of quirks and secrets." No doubt, we could all find some adult like this at our school. In 'Danny the Champion of the World', this villainous character is one Victor Hazell, who dominates the area where he lives and oppresses everyone. He obnoxiously seizes every chance to show off his wealth and rubs it in the face of the simple town folk. The most unjust thing though is that, each year, he buys hundreds of pheasants, fattens them up and then shoots them with his guests in a decadent hunting party. To make matters worse, "the cost of rearing and keeping one single pheasant up to the time when it is ready to be shot is equal to the price of 100 loaves of bread," according to Danny's father.

You will also learn that the characters in this book are very different. Victor Hazell is rich while the townspeople are poor. He is old but the townspeople are young. Finally, he is bad yet the townspeople are decent.

In our circumstances, we suffer our own despot who assaults us with a barrage of unending homework, drills us on useless trivia, and ambushes us all too often with arbitrary assessments. To add insult to injury, we are bombarded with grade grenades that seem lower than any negative number could possibly be. Mr Hazell's pheasants suffer physical demise while we must endure an academic one. In many ways, we share a similar plight to the hapless pheasants.

Like Danny, we do not find life to be always pleasant or fair. Indeed, things are unjust at our school just like in Danny's town. Choices aren't usually easy or obvious. In an act of courage, Danny chooses to help his father and joins a scheme to kill the fun of the annual hunting party. In doing so, and with the overwhelming support of the community, he ends a great injustice to the pheasants while managing to humiliate Victor Hazell.

Read this book and imagine that instead of suffering under the heel of an unworthy despot, we could be in the driver's seat, chart our own course and march to a different drummer. Hear the call, rise up, and join forces. Let's not wait to get shot. We too can be the Champion of our World!