

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Runner Up of English Division**  
**Junior Division**

**Name of Winner: Chan Hiu Man**

**Name of School: PLK Mrs Ma Kam Ming Cheung  
Fook Sien College**

**Book Title: A Tale of Two Cities**

**Author: Charles Dickens**

**Publisher: Oxford University Press**

**A Tale of Two Cities**

*A Tale of Two Cities* is a historical novel set during the French Revolution, written by Charles Dickens. In the story, the two major cities of Paris and London are connected. The story focuses on the life of Dr Manette's family and a revolutionary couple to uncover the dark masks hidden by the nobles in France. The story also describes how the

French nobles committed acts such as mutilating the people, arousing their hatred and leading to a revolution against the corrupt royal family.

In this report, I will discuss one of the themes in the book – social injustice. Dickens explores social injustice by depicting stark class differences. The privileged nobles enjoy luxury, while ordinary people endure poverty, hunger, and suffering. They exploit the lower classes through heavy taxation, disregarding their struggles. The unfair trials and leniency for the elite also reveal a biased legal system. In the book, Dickens vividly portrays the pain of the common people and highlights systemic injustice.

The social inequality depicted in *A Tale of Two Cities* deeply resonated with me, evoking my anger and empathy. It raises questions such as why such injustice and unfair treatment are allowed to persist. While contemporary society is relatively more harmonious and fair, there still exists a persistent gap. The growing disparity between the rich and the poor, especially in housing, healthcare, and education, serves as a sad reminder of ongoing social inequality.

As someone from a low-income background, I keenly feel the inequality present in society. My grandmother, a long-term patient, requires regular medical attention. However, due to our financial constraints, she cannot afford private clinics and must rely on public hospitals. Unfortunately, the limited resources in the public healthcare system result in

delayed treatment, worsening her condition. Witnessing my grandmother's struggle, I have deep resentment towards the unfairness and inequality in our society.

In addition, housing inequality in modern times adds another layer to social injustice. Differences in affordable housing acquisition, quality, social isolation, and conditions contribute to this issue, primarily driven by socio-economic status. Low-income individuals and marginalised communities often face significant housing challenges. For instance, in Sham Shui Po, Hong Kong, many low-income families endure long waits for public housing, resulting in cramped living spaces. Basic sanitary facilities are often lacking, leading to poor living conditions. These circumstances highlight the reality of housing inequality.

Some of my relatives and friends reside in Sham Shui Po and confront these housing disparities, evoking deep dissatisfaction and sympathy.

From this book, we can better understand the effects of social inequality. Although the story took place centuries ago, many of these social problems such as wealth gap and social injustice still persist today. Readers can relate the real world to novel's plot, enhancing their understanding of the challenges in improving social injustice. It also reminds us that a person's efforts may not be sufficient to change the situation. However, this book also inspires us to strive for personal development and growth. In this way, we can have the ability and power to protect the people we care about and avoid becoming the most vulnerable people in society.

In order to prepare us in face of the upcoming challenges, we must equip ourselves effectively. Firstly, education and the pursuit of knowledge are essential. Studying provides us with a strong foundation of knowledge and equips us with necessary skills. Seeking diverse experiences and learning opportunities is beneficial to our personal growth. For example, volunteering and social service enable us to help those in need and connect with people from different backgrounds, fostering empathy and care for others. By engaging in these activities, we develop ourselves into capable individuals who not only prioritize our own well-being but also extend care and support to those around us. This active involvement in our society allows us to

contribute positively and make a meaningful impact on the lives of others.

All in all, the book has its great value in inspiring people to pursue justice and equality, and personal development.

Although this book was written in the 19th century, the themes and messages in the book are relevant and timeless.

I feel deeply inspired by the book and therefore would like to recommend it to you.