



The City of Ember

Jeanne DuPrau

Teacher's Guide

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CLASSROOM FAVORITES

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Synopsis

Chapter 1

The first chapter is a flashback, as the mysterious builders of the city of Ember explain that the inhabitants must not leave for at least two hundred years. The builders will provide the city's mayor with instructions for escaping when the time comes. The instructions will be sealed in a box. Things go as planned until the time of the seventh mayor, who brings the box home and attacks it with a hammer. He is too weak to open it or return it to its hiding place, and so he dies with the box hidden in the back of the closet. When the time comes, the lock automatically opens, but no one hears it.

Chapter 2

It is always night in the city of Ember, but there is no moon, no stars. The only light during the regular twelve hours of "day" comes from floodlamps that cast a yellowish glow over the streets of the city. Beyond are the pitch-black Unknown Regions, which no one has ever explored because an understanding of fire and electricity has been lost, and with it the idea of a moveable light. Now, 241 years after its creation, the city of Ember is facing food shortages, citizen riots, and rolling blackouts. The populace is growing increasingly frightened. It is Assignment Day, the time when twelve-year-olds finish their schooling and get their jobs. All jobs are assigned randomly, based on the city's needs. Twelve-year-old Doon Harrow and Lina Mayfleet are crushed to receive their assignments: Doon is a messenger and Lina is a pipework laborer. At Doon's suggestion, they switch jobs and each is far happier. Doon wants to repair the plumbing

in the tunnels where a river roars because he is trying to find a way to save his city. What will happen when the generator finally fails? Doon and Lina seem to be the only people who are worried about this approaching disaster.

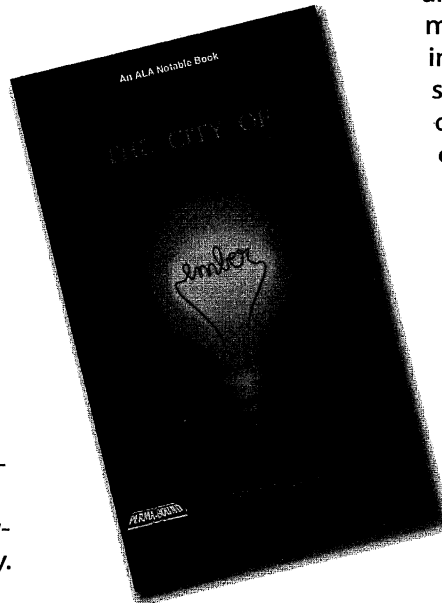
Chapter 3

Running home, Lina thinks about a rumor she heard that lightbulbs are about to run out. Lina arrives home to the yarn shop that her Granny operates. Since the death of her parents a few years ago, Lina lives with her Granny and younger sister Poppy. The shop is a mess because Granny is growing increasingly frail and suffering from serious memory problems. The next day at work delivering messages all over the city, Lina sees a group of "Believers" singing on the street corner. They hold hands and sing songs. Lina delivers a message to the mayor, "Delivery at eight, from Looper."

Meanwhile, Doon quickly learns that Ember is in far worse shape than he suspects. He is especially upset that no one understands how the generator works, the most crucial element in their survival.

Chapter 4

Lina's Granny is searching frantically for something that she has lost, but she has no idea what it is. Lina tells her kindly neighbor Mrs. Murdo about her Granny's forgetfulness, and Mrs. Murdo agrees to look in on Granny. Lina next visits Clary, the greenhouse manager. Lina's father had worked at the greenhouses, so it is a very special place for Lina. Clary is always kind to Lina. Clary has bad news, however: a new disease is destroying the potato crop, and potatoes are the primary food in Ember since all the canned food is almost exhausted. Sadge Merrall, one of the clerks in the Supply Depot, has walked into the darkness and gone mad as a result. Lina tells Clary that she has always imagined another city, a beautiful city that she draws over and over.



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Chapter 5

Lina buys two colored pencils at exorbitant prices from a man she recognizes as Looper. Poppy has gotten lost while Lina is absorbed in the beauty of the pencils' bright colors, for everything in Ember is dark and colorless. Doon finds Poppy and keeps her safe. Back home, the pencils don't seem as beautiful because of the shame Lina feels about nearly losing Poppy.

Chapter 6

Fear settles over the city; Ember is in grave danger. The mayor gives a speech to reassure the people but since his words are unintelligible, he causes more panic than he allays. The crowd becomes a mob and Lina quickly leaves. Back home, she finds the object that her Granny had been searching for: it is the box that the builders had left for the future inhabitants, the instructions for safely leaving Ember. Unfortunately, Granny has opened it and Poppy has eaten some of the directions.

Chapter 7

Lina realizes that the instructions are from the builders, but she is unable to create meaning from the fragments. She asks Captain Fleery from the messengers to help. Fleery has no interest in the instructions; instead, she tells Lina to join the Believers, because the group has given her great comfort. Lina next asks Lizzie, her former best friend, but she quickly realizes that Lizzie is shallow and uninterested in the directions. Lina then writes a note to the mayor about her discovery. Last, she realizes that Doon is the best person to help her.

Chapter 8

Doon keeps investigating the pipeworks. In desperation, he goes to the library to get information, but none of the books offers even the slightest bit of help.

Chapter 9

Doon and Lina try to figure out the missing letters and words in the message. Meanwhile, they become convinced that a mysterious door in the pipeworks holds the key to their escape from Ember.

Chapter 10

Granny dies during the night. Lina is only twelve years old.

Chapter 11

Mrs. Murdo invites Lina and Poppy to move in with

her and cares for them tenderly. Lina meets Lizzie, who drops her groceries. As they scatter, Lina sees that Lizzie has all sorts of rare and unobtainable luxuries. Lizzie reveals that her boyfriend Looper has stolen the goods, selling some and sharing some with Lizzie. She offers some to Lina, but Lina cannot bring herself to accept them when so many other people are suffering.

Chapter 12

Doon opens the mysterious door and finds the mayor stuffing himself with Looper's stolen food. Lina and Doon tell the mayor's guards about the mayor's perfidy.

Chapter 13

Lina tells Clary about the message and the mayor's theft. Lina and Doon realize that the paper is indeed Instructions for Egress, and painstakingly work out the missing letters.

Chapter 14

The next day is Song Rehearsal Day, so all the citizens of Ember will be preparing for the Singing. Doon and Lina go into the caverns by the river and open another mysterious door. They find candles and matches, which they slowly figure out how to use. Next they find boats and oars and realize the escape is down the river.

Chapter 15

Filled with joy at having saved their fellow citizens, Doon and Lina are shocked to discover that they are being hunted for "spreading vicious rumors." Clearly, the guards have been corrupted as well as the mayor. Lina and Doon decide to leave Ember, but first Lina wants to leave a note for Clary.

Chapter 16

The authorities catch Lina but she manages to escape during a blackout. She ends up on the roof of the highest building in Ember. The Singing starts and Lina's heart fills with joy. She is about to tell everyone about the escape, when the lights go out again and panic erupts.

Chapter 17

Doon prepares to escape. Lina meets him, carrying Poppy. The three children set off on a dangerous journey into the dark, unknown world beyond their city.

Chapter 18

They travel down the river and find a journal.

Chapter 19

In the final stage of their journey, they climb upward for several hours. They emerge on earth's surface and see the moon, which astonishes them. The air is sweet and the insects softly hum. The world looks just as Lina had long dreamed.

Chapter 20

They read the journal and realize that the builders created Ember to save the human race. One hundred mature men and women were entrusted with one hundred babies. The sun rises and the children are enchanted by its warmth and light. They send a message back down to Ember in an attempt to save the residents. Mrs. Murdo picks the message up. The novel ends with this cliffhanger.

Timeline of Dystopian Works

- 1868** John Stuart Mill uses the term dystopia in a parliamentary speech, possibly the first recorded use of the term.
- 1879** In *The Begum's Fortune*, Jules Verne contrasts utopian and dystopian societies. Some consider the novel the first modern dystopia; others, an important forerunner.
- 1898** H.G. Wells' novel *War of the Worlds*, the first depiction of an alien invasion of Earth.
- 1899** H. G. Wells' *The Story of the Days To Come* and *When the Sleeper Wakes*, considered by some to be the first modern dystopias.
- 1908** H.G. Wells' *The War in the Air*, the first prediction of air raid against cities.
- 1914** H.G. Wells' *The World Set Free*, the first prophecy of devastating nuclear wars that will end civilization. Charlotte Perkins *Gilman's Herland*, debatably the first feminist dystopia.
- 1920** Karel Capek's play *R.U.R.*, introduces the term robot and the modern robot concept, and is the first elaborate depiction of a machine take-over.
- 1925** Franz Kafka's novel *Der Prozess*, a pessimistic perspective on modern society that influences dystopian fiction.
- 1926** Fritz Lang's movie *Metropolis*, first dystopian movie.
- 1932** Aldous Huxley's dystopian *Brave New World*.
- 1948** George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*, anti-totalitarian dystopia. It is the most influential dystopian novel of all time.
- 1952** The heart pacemaker, the first implanted mechanical body enhancement, is introduced. To some, this event marks the beginning of the post-human era. Fredrick Pohl's *The Space Merchants*, the first elaborate satire of commercialism and consumerism. It introduces the concepts of corporate dominion, corporate exploitation, and corporate wars. Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano*, the first depiction of a pseudo-utopian society run by a computer. The term "dystopia" is popularized in *Quest For Utopia* by Glenn Negley and J. Max Patrick.
- 1966** Harry Harrison's *Make Room, Make Room*. In 1973, it is adapted for the movies as *Soylent Green*.
- 1967** The first heart transplant; adapted in literature as the theme of humans as spare parts.
- 1968** Stanley Kubrick's and Arthur C. Clark's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Phillip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
- 1971** Stanley Kubrick's movie adaptation of *A Clockwork Orange*.
- 1972** John Brunner advances the dystopian theme of environmental collapse in *The Sheep Look Up*.
- 1979** Ridley Scott's horror movie *Alien*.
- 1982** Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* sparks debates on hypertechnology and urbanization.
- 1987** Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, the first feminist dystopia to gain wide recognition.
- 1990** William Gibson and Bruce Sterling's *The Difference Engine*, the first dystopian steam-punk novel.
- 1997** Andrew Niccol's movie *Gattaca*, the first major genetic-engineering dystopia.
- 2003** Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, a radical renewal of the bio-engineering horror concept.

Author Sketch

Jeanne DuPrau was born in 1944, in San Francisco, CA. Her father worked as an executive for a steel company, while her mother was a homemaker and a painter. DuPrau earned her B.A. in English from Scrips College in 1966, and her certificate to teach secondary-school English from the University of California—Berkeley the following year. As with many people today, DuPrau has enjoyed several different careers, including teacher, editor, and technical writer. She has worked on both coasts.



DuPrau began her writing career with nonfiction books including *Adoption: The Facts, Feelings, and Issues of a Double Heritage*. This book received positive notices as a sensitive, perceptive portrayal of the psychological and emotional impact of adopting a child or being adopted. She followed this with a memoir, *The Earth House: You Have Nothing to Fear in This Moment*. In it, DuPrau describes her experience with Zen Buddhism and building a house of earth with her partner, who died of cancer before the project could be completed.

The City of Ember is her first novel for middle graders. She lives in Menlo Park, California, where she tends a large garden and a tiny dog.

Bibliography

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- Booklist*, March 15, 1990, Stephanie Zvirin, review of *Adoption*, p. 1423; November 15, 1999, Randy Meyer, review of *Cloning*, p. 611; April 15, 2003, Sally Estes, review of *The City of Ember*, p. 1466.
- Book Report*, September–October, 1990, Brooke Dillon, review of *Adoption*, p. 68.
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- Horn Book*, May–June, 2003, Roger Sutton, review of *The City of Ember*, p. 343.
- Lambda Book Report*, September–October, 1992, Randy Turoff, review of *The Earth House*, p. 42.
- Library Journal*, April 1, 1992, Harriet Gottfried, review of *The Earth House*, p. 126.
- New York Times*, June 22, 2003, Elizabeth Devereaux, review of *The City of Ember*.

- Publishers Weekly*, June 30, 2003, Jennifer M. Brown, "Flying Starts" (interview), p. 18.
- School Library Journal*, July, 1990, Anna Biagioni Hart, review of *Adoption*, p. 90; May, 2003, John Peters, review of *The City of Ember*, p. 150.

Critic's Corner

City of Ember was named a *Kirkus Review Editors' Choice*, a New York Public Library 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing, and an ALA Notable Book. Writing in *Booklist*, reviewer Sally Estes notes that "Readers will relate to Lina and Doon's resourcefulness and courage in the face of ominous odds." *USA Today* praised the novel this way: "DuPrau's first foray into fiction creates a realistic post-apocalyptic world where everyone has lived underground for so long that they assume it has always been that way. . . . Reminiscent of post-apocalypse fiction like Robert O'Brien's *Z for Zachariah*, DuPrau's book leaves Doon and Lina on the verge of the undiscovered country and readers wanting more."

"The cliffhanger ending will leave readers clamoring for the next installment," *Kirkus Reviews* noted. "While *Ember* is colorless and dark, the book itself is rich with description. . . . Part mystery, part adventure story, this novel provides science fiction for those who do not like science fiction," said the reviewer for VOYA.

Elizabeth Devereaux, writing in the *New York Times*, remarked of the work, "Rapidly and solidly developed story lines keep such a tight focus on Lina and Doon's struggles that the sheer thrill of the climax almost sneaks up on the reader." *School Library Journal* critic John Peters predicted that *The City of Ember's* "quick pace and the uncomplicated characters and situations will keep voracious fans of the genre engaged."

Other Books by Jeanne DuPrau

- Adoption: The Facts, Feelings, and Issues of a Double Heritage* (1981)
- The Earth House: There Is Nothing to Fear in This Moment* (1992)
- Cloning* (2000)
- Cells* (2002)
- The American Colonies* (2002)

General Objectives

1. To analyze the novel's setting
2. To analyze a work of dystopian literature
3. To appreciate the increasing suspense
4. To assess each character's personality
5. To trace the novel's plot
6. To appreciate the author's creativity
7. To understand the conventions of science fiction
8. To find examples of compassion
9. To evaluate the effectiveness of the cliffhanger ending
10. To describe the book's mood

Specific Objectives

1. To find elements of realism and science fiction
2. To analyze the novel's symbolism
3. To determine ways to help save the earth
4. To understand why the builders created Ember
5. To understand why the citizens of Ember are in tremendous danger
6. To assess the roles of chance and luck in a community's success
7. To compare and contrast Lina and Lizzie
8. To analyze the novel's tone
9. To understand how Lina and Doon escape
10. To determine the author's purpose in this novel

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Jeanne DuPrau's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

mood the strong feeling we get from a literary work. The mood is created by characterization, description, images, and dialogue. Some possible moods include: terror, horror, tension, calmness, and suspense. The mood of *The City of Ember* is somber, even terrifying. DuPrau creates the dismal, gloomy atmosphere by using drab colors, grays and blacks and browns. The mood becomes terrifying when Lina and Doon are trying to escape from the mayor and his guards. The tension intensifies as they ride down the river and readers wonder if they will survive, and if so, what they will encounter at the other end.

symbolism when an image stands for something other than what was expected. The ocean, for example, may be said to symbolize "eternity" and the phrase "river to the sea" could stand for "life flowing into afterlife." In most instances the symbol does not directly reveal what it stands for; rather, the meaning must be discovered through a close reading of the literary work and an understanding of conventional literary and cultural symbols. For example, we realize that the "stars and stripes" stands for the American flag. We know this because we are told it is so, for the flag itself in no way looks like the United States. Without cultural agreement, many of the symbols we commonly accept would be meaningless. Perhaps the most noticeable symbol in *The City of Ember* is the pupa: it begins life as a drab worm imprisoned in a bottle but soon transforms into a lovely moth and flies away. This mirrors the fate of Lina and Doon, as they leave the dreary prison of Ember under Earth's surface for the glorious freedom offered on Earth's surface.

science fiction fantasy writing that tells about make-believe events that include science or technology. Often, science fiction is set in the future, on distant planets, or among alien races. *The City of Ember* is set under Earth's surface at least 200 years in the future, a forgotten colony established to make sure that people survived wholesale destruction.

The Importance of Setting

The dark city of Ember, a decaying place with no natural light surrounded by the vast Unknown Regions is the setting for the book.

The builders created Ember over 240 years ago to ensure that humans would continue to exist on Earth. However, the instructions for leaving of Ember have been lost and forgotten. As a result, people have been living in Ember longer than the builders intended.

The generator that creates electricity is giving out, resulting in frequent blackouts. The storerooms that hold all Ember's supplies are nearly empty and the crops in the greenhouses that grow Ember's fresh food are beginning to fail. As a result, food is becoming very scarce. This leads to public panic.

DuPrau's wonderfully imaginative world evokes Europe in the worst days of World War II, a desperate and dreary continent. However, unlike Europe, it appears that Ember has no allies and thus no hope of liberation.

Cross-Curricular Sources

Books

Eoin Colfer, *The Opal Deception*
Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
Cameron Dokey, *Sunlight and Shadow*
Nancy Farmer, *The Sea of Trolls*
Nancy Farmer, *The House of the Scorpion*
Madeleine L'Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time*
C.S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia*
Lois Lowry, *The Giver*
George Orwell, *1984*
Christopher Paolini, *Eldest*
James Patterson, *Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment*
Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*
J. R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

DVDs and Videos

2001: A Space Odyssey
Blade Runner
Clockwork Orange
Gattaca
Soylent Green
Star Wars

Audio

City of Ember (Random House, 2003)

Internet

City of Ember Web site
<http://www.jeanneduprau.com>
City of Ember
www.mce.k12tn.net/reading52/city_of_ember.htm
City of Ember Book Talk
nancykeane.com/booktalks/duprau_city.htm
City of Ember background
www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=0375822747&view=rg

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Jeanne DuPrau's *The City of Ember* should include these aspects:

Themes

- light and dark
- catastrophe
- dishonesty
- survival
- education
- the future
- family
- friendship
- science fiction
- symbolism

Motifs

- being assigned your job automatically
- living in a dying world
- experiencing constant shortages and blackouts
- wanting to help others
- fearing the destruction of earth
- receiving an inadequate education
- going against authority
- coping with being different from others
- understanding the conventions of science fiction
- saving the planet

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the book. Explain the meaning of each. Page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. There it sat, unnoticed, year after year, until its time arrived, and the lock quietly clicked open. (Chap.1, p. 3)
(The novel opens on a note of high suspense. The builders have created an underground town to ensure the survival of people on Earth. The town has only enough supplies for 200-220 years. The builders have left the instructions for egress in a box. The box has opened, showing that it is time to leave, but it has been lost so no one opens it. This event plunges readers right into the action: will the residents of the city of Ember be able to survive? Will they be able to escape?)
2. Still, Lina wanted the other city to exist. In her imagination, it was so beautiful and it seemed so real. (Chap. 2, p. 26)
(Twelve-year-old Lina imagines a beautiful world of color and sweet smells. It appears that she imagines Earth's surface. The author never explains how this is possible, since Lina has never been on Earth, seen any pictures of Earth, or even heard any stories of it. At the end of the book, Lina arrives at the world she had long imagined.)
3. "Delivery at eight, from Looper." (Chap. 2, p. 38)
(At the time, readers do not have a clue what this cryptic message means. Later, we discover that Looper, a supply clerk, has been stealing some of the precious remaining stock. He sells some to the mayor and the rest on the black market. This shows how corrupt the mayor is, which means that Lina and Doon cannot go to him for help or with the news that they have found a way out of Ember.)
4. "All I know is, the river makes it go." (Chap. 3, p. 48)
(As Doon discovers to his horror, no one has a clue how the generator works. This ignorance, as much as the shortages, seals Ember's doom.)
5. She was chewing on some crumpled paper. She had paper in her hands, too, and was tearing it. (Chap.6, p. 92)
(Nothing could be more important for the survival of Ember's people than their escape. However, when Granny opens the box and removes the paper with instructions for their escape, little Poppy starts to destroy it. Lina and Doon spend much time trying to piece together the vital message.)
6. Still, something was wrong with grabbing the good things just because you could. (Chap. 11, p. 153)
(Lizzie offers Lina some of the food and other supplies that Looper has stolen from the supply house. Although she is sorely tempted to bring delicious and nourishing food to her Granny and little sister Poppy, Lina refuses to accept any of the stolen food. This shows that she is a moral person who does the right thing, even at great personal sacrifice.)
7. "There is so much darkness in Ember, Lina. It's not just outside, it's inside us too." (Chap. p. 168)
(Clary tells Lina that everyone feels a hunger for bigger and better things. This wanting is fine as long as it is kept in check but unrestrained, it becomes an evil force that overwhelms a person. This is what happens to Lizzie, Looper, and most especially the mayor and his guards. They are all corrupted by their greed.)
8. Lina knew that she would do – if only the lights would come back on, if only this was not the very last blackout in the history of Ember. (Chap.16, p. 225)
(Lina vows to leave Ember with Doon to save herself and her sister. She knows that no one else can help—not even any of the adults.)
9. "Light," she said. (Chap. 19, p. 255)
(On a literal level, the light refers to the sunrise. On a symbolic level, the light stands for wisdom. Because of their high morals, readers can be sure that Doon and Lina will take good care of the earth if they are indeed the only ones alive. They will repopulate it with decent, caring people who will protect it.)

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10. How could anyone have allowed such a place to be harmed? (Chap. 20, p. 264)
(Earth is like the Garden of Eden, filled with innocence and goodness. Lina wonders how anyone could have destroyed the Earth. The author's theme, of course, is to protect Earth while we still have the opportunity.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. When and where does the story take place?
(The story takes place in the future in an underground city, built and populated to make sure that people survived after wholesale destruction.)
2. How do people get their jobs in Ember?
(They are assigned the jobs when they are twelve years old. The jobs assignments are based solely on the city's needs, not the individual's needs, talents, or desires.)
3. What is behind the door in Tunnel 351?
(The grossly-fat mayor, gorging himself on delicacies that Looper has stolen from the storeroom.)
4. What do the kids find in the room they locate by using the instructions for egress?
(The room that contains the way out of Ember. It contains candles, matches, and boats.)
5. How do Lina, Doon, and Poppy escape from Ember?
(They sail down the river on boats and climb up a long tunnel for several hours.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. Why does Lina no longer feel so strongly about the colored pencils when she gets home?
(They are mingled with shame and fear because she let her lust of material goods blind her to her sister's safety. This shows that Lina is a decent and moral person, the kind of person who would be ideal to start a new society.)

7. Why does Lina refuse the delicious food from Lizzie?
(She does not want to take food from others.)
8. What is the theme or main idea of this book?
(The theme is the importance of taking care of the Earth, of protecting people from destruction by resolving potentially dangerous conflicts peacefully.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. Do you think Lina and Doon should have left without helping all the other residents of Ember? Why or why not?
(Yes, because at least they are safe. If there are no other people left on Earth, they can repopulate the world.)
10. Did you like the cliffhanger ending or think that it was a cheat?
(Students are apt to find the ending disappointing because it raises questions that it does not resolve.)

Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)

11. Hold a roundtable discussion in which you explore how we can resolve international disputes and prevent the wholesale destruction of earth.
12. Working with a group of classmates, dramatize the way that you would deal with life on Ember.

Across the Curriculum

Art/Music

1. Draw the box that contains the Instructions for Egress.
2. Working with a group of classmates, organize a "Singing" of one of Ember's songs.
3. Write a new "Song of the City" to reflect Ember's current condition.
4. Draw Lina's vision of life on Earth's surface, the pictures that she keeps drawing from her dreams.
5. Create the Bigfoot Scurry Dance that is popular with the citizens of Ember.

Language Arts

1. Ember creates its own traditions, such as the Sing. Create a new tradition that you believe will benefit many Americans.
2. *The City of Ember* can be called a "dystopia." Explain this term and describe why you think it does or does not fit the novel.
3. Read another dystopic novel, such as George Orwell's *1984*. Compare and contrast it to *The City of Ember*.
4. Lina imagines a beautiful city, a city that she draws over and over. Describe your earliest memory. Ask a parent or older relative to verify your remembrance.
5. Create a secret code for an important message that you want to transmit. Trade papers with some classmates to see if they can decipher your code.
6. At the end of the novel, Lina and Doon find themselves alone on Earth. They eat some fruit and explore the area. Explain how Earth's surface symbolizes the Garden of Eden.
7. Explain the symbolism of the novel's title.

History/Social Studies

1. During the Cold War in the 1950s, some Americans built fall-out shelters to protect themselves and their families in the event of a nuclear attack. Find out more about this fascinating period in American history. Then parallel what you learn to the novel's events and mood.
2. In some ways, Ember is a utopian community, as its members work together for the common good. Research the history of a real utopian community such as Brook Farm.
3. Create an emergency plan to help protect your family in case a tragedy such as that which caused the builders to create Ember.
4. On a map, locate another "lost" city such as the ruins of an ancient Greek city.

Science/Math

1. Lina's parents die of the "coughing sickness." Find out some possible exact names for this sickness. Then explain why people would get a disease like this in *The City of Ember*.

2. Lina imagines a beautiful city, a city that she draws over and over. Report on memory. How are memories formed? Is it possible that Lina could "remember" something that she has never experienced? Why or why not?
3. Clary gives Lina a bean seed to sprout. Sprout some seeds, keeping a record of the rate at which they sprout.
4. List the world's major rivers.
5. Lina and Doon encounter stalagmites and stalactites in the cave. Explain what these are and how they are formed.

Speech/Drama

1. With a partner, debate whether or not Lina and Doon should have left Ember without telling the inhabitants what they discovered.
2. In a roundtable discussion, explore some ways to deal with the shortages on Ember.
3. Imagine that you were the builders creating Ember. Working with some classmates, write the rules for this new community.
4. Working with a partner, role-play the scene in which Doon and Lina decipher the code.
5. None of the adults in Ember is able to find a solution to the problems plaguing it. As a result, it is left to the children to save their world. With a classmate, debate whether or not it is realistic that an entire culture would be saved by a twelve-year-old boy and girl.
6. Choose a dramatic scene from the novel, such as the escape scene. Working with some classmates, perform the scene.

Alternate Assessment

1. Make a three-dimensional model of the city of Ember.
2. Create an organization to help protect the world and resolve disputes.
3. Write the next chapter in the novel to resolve the cliffhanger ending.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Match each description with a name from the list. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| A. Lina Mayfleet | F. Poppy |
| B. Doon Harrow | G. Granny |
| C. Miss Thorn | H. Clary |
| D. Major Cole | I. Mrs. Murdo |
| E. Lizzie Bisco | J. Sadge Merrall |

- ___ 1. The teacher
- ___ 2. A twelve-year-old girl who works as a messenger
- ___ 3. The supply clerk who goes mad after he wanders into the Unknown Regions
- ___ 4. Lina's younger sister
- ___ 5. The man who grows fat on stolen food
- ___ 6. The kindly neighbor who takes in Lina and Poppy after their grandmother dies
- ___ 7. The head of the greenhouses
- ___ 8. Looper's girlfriend; a supply clerk who accepts stolen food
- ___ 9. The woman who owns the yarn shop
- ___ 10. The twelve-year-old boy who likes bugs and mechanical objects

Part II: Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each person, place, or thing and explain why it is important in the story.

- 1. the strong box
- 2. pineapple
- 3. the Believers
- 4. lightbulbs
- 5. yarn

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if a part is false.

- ___ 1. The instructions for escaping from Ember are passed down from person to person for fifteen generations.
- ___ 2. It is always night in the city of Ember, but there is no moon or stars.
- ___ 3. The citizens of Ember have candles, matches, and flashlights to help them when the blackouts occur.
- ___ 4. Ember is facing food shortages, citizen riots, and rolling blackouts.
- ___ 5. People on Ember get to choose the jobs they want, just as people on earth can do.
- ___ 6. At first, Doon is a messenger and Lina is a pipework laborer, but at Doon's suggestion they switch jobs.
- ___ 7. Lina delivers a message to the mayor, "Delivery at eight, from Looper."
- ___ 8. A new disease is destroying the potato crop, and potatoes are the primary food in Ember since the food shortages have grown far more serious.
- ___ 9. The mayor gives a brilliant, rousing speech, which makes everyone in Ember feel good.
- ___ 10. The escape instructions are in a very difficult secret code.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Explain how the title "Ember" fits the city. Discuss the city's appearance and colors.
- 2. Summarize the events in *The City of Ember*.
- 3. Write a prequel to the novel in which you explain why the builders established Ember.
- 4. Compare and contrast Lina and Doon. Show how they are the same and different.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Choose the term that best completes each of the following statements.

1. The mysterious builders of the city of Ember explain that the inhabitants must not leave for at least **(200, 2,000)** years
2. Ember is located **(on another planet, underground)**.
3. Beyond Ember are the pitch-black **(Strange Lands, Unknown Regions)** which no one has ever explored successfully.
4. On **(Assignment Day, Career Day)**, twelve-year-olds finish their schooling and get their jobs.
5. Lina works as a **(teacher, messenger)**, a job that she enjoys very much because it allows her to work with people.
6. The **(“Believers,” “Followers”)** hold hands and sing songs on the street corners.
7. Lina buys two **(bolts of fabric, colored pencils)** at exorbitant prices from Looper.
8. Doon goes to the **(school, library)** to get information, but his search is fruitless.
9. Lina and Doon realize that the paper from the box is indeed Instructions for **(Entrance, Egress)**, and they painstakingly work out the missing letters.
10. Lina, Doon, and Poppy escape from Ember in **(boats, airplanes)**.

Part II: Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each person, place, or thing and explain why it is important in the story.

1. boats
2. matches
3. candles
4. egress
5. the moth

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if a part is false.

- ___ 1. Now, 241 years after its creation, the city of Ember is facing food shortages, citizen riots, and rolling blackouts. The people are staying remarkably calm, however.
- ___ 2. People have a clear understanding of electricity and have many flashlights to use as they repair the generator.
- ___ 3. The only light during the regular twelve hours of "day" comes from floodlamps that cast a yellowish glow over the streets of the city.
- ___ 4. Sixteen-year-old Doon Harrow and Lina Mayfleet have been close friends since they were babies; there has never been any trouble between them.
- ___ 5. Lina's Granny is growing increasingly frail and suffering from serious memory problems.
- ___ 6. Lina tells Clary that she has always imagined another city, a beautiful city that she draws over and over.
- ___ 7. Lina asks Lizzie, her former best friend, for help reading the message from the box but quickly realizes that Lizzie is shallow and uninterested in the message.
- ___ 8. Lina and Lizzie become convinced that a mysterious door in the mayor's office holds the key to their escape from Ember.
- ___ 9. Clary invites Lina and Lizzie to move in with her and cares for them.
- ___ 10. Doon and Lina are shocked to discover that they are being hunted by everyone for "spreading vicious rumors."

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Trace the novel's plot. Include some events from the rising action, climax, and resolution.
2. Explain two of the following symbols from the novel: the moth, darkness, candles and matches, lightbulbs, the sun.
3. Argue that the novel's ending is or is not satisfying. Explain what you liked or did not like about it.
4. Identify two characters whom you believe were heroic in the novel. Give specific reasons from the book to justify your choices.

Answer Key

VOABULARY ACROSS

2. antics
6. weary
7. frayed
9. defiant

DOWN

1. hogwash
3. illegible
4. gruff
5. serene
10. tumult.

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. I |
| 2. A | 7. H |
| 3. J | 8. E |
| 4. F | 9. G |
| 5. D | 10. B |

Part II: Identification (20 points)

1. The strong box holds the instructions for Egress. This provides the key to the survival of Ember's citizens.
2. Pineapple represents all the everyday foods that have become rare luxuries since Ember has run out of most foods.
3. The Believers are a religious cult. They have taken comfort from their faith rather than actively seeking a way out of Ember.
4. Lightbulbs are becoming more and more scarce. When they run out, the city will be plunged into darkness, even if the generator is still working. Lightbulbs are a traditional symbol for bright ideas, which none of the adults have. As a result, the future of Doon rests in the hands of two twelve-year-olds, Doon and Lina.
5. Granny ran a yarn shop. As she grows increasingly frail and senile, the shop becomes disordered. This mirrors the disorder of her mind.

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. T |
| 4. T | 9. F |
| 5. F | 10. F |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. 200 | 6. "Believers" |
| 2. underground | 7. colored pencils |
| 3. Unknown Regions | 8. library |
| 4. Assignment Day | 9. Egress |
| 5. messenger | 10. boats |

Part II: Identification (20 points)

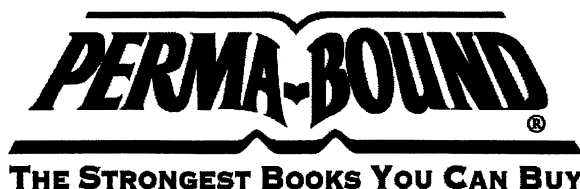
1. The boats have been built by the builders as the means of escape from Ember.
2. Matches have been lost from Ember. As a result, the citizens have no way to make a portable light and thus explore their environment.
3. Like matches, candles have been lost from Ember. This shows how backward the people have become.
4. "Egress" means exit. Finding the exit out of Ember is the only way the citizens can survive. They will surely die on Ember—and soon.
5. The moth comes to represent Doon and Lina. Initially, it is imprisoned in its cage. It seemingly lives only to eat. Then it transforms, breaks free, and flies away. This symbolizes what happens to Doon and Lina.

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. F |
| 5. T | 10. T |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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