



The People of Sparks

by Jeanne DuPrau

Teacher's Guide

Written By Laune Rozakis, Ph.D.



CLASSROOM FAVORITES

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Synopsis

Part 1: Arrival

1. WHAT TORREN SAW

Ten-year-old Torren sees the people of Ember emerge from underground. About 400 people struggle upward. Sparks has only 322 people, so Torren is terrified by the crowds. He runs to get the three people who govern Sparks: Mary Waters, Ben Barlow, and Wilmer Dent. Teenager Doon Harrow from Ember tells the people of Sparks who the Emberites are and where they have come from. Teenager Lina Mayfleet tells Mary Waters that her younger sister Poppy is very ill. Mary welcomes the people of Ember in a brief speech.

2. OUT FROM BELOW

The people of Ember continue to emerge from underground. Readers learn that the mayor of Ember and his guards drowned as they attempted to escape without helping their fellow Emberites. Many Emberites are faint from hunger and the heat.

3. THROUGH THE VILLAGE

Lina's family is comprised of her sister Poppy, her neighbor Mrs. Murdo, Doon Mayfleet, and his father. As the Emberites gather at the village plaza, Lina and many others eagerly learn words for the new things they see. Mary Waters explains that Emberite families with young children, the elderly, or the infirm will be sheltered. Lina and her family are taken to the home of Dr. Hester because Poppy is so ill.

4. THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE

Lina is terrified of the fire that roars in Dr. Hester's fireplace. Lina is also surprised at the messiness of the doctor's house, because people in Ember kept their homes more orderly. Torren is openly hostile to the newcomers.

THE FIRST TOWN MEETING

Mary, Ben, and Wilmer decide to shelter the Emberites in the Pioneer, an old hotel, for six months. After that, the Emberites will be on their own.

5. THE PIONEER

Doon is exhilarated by all the new experiences, but other Emberites are miserable. The Pioneer Hotel is a shambles and the 400 Emberites are crammed into 75 rooms. They begin to clean their new home.

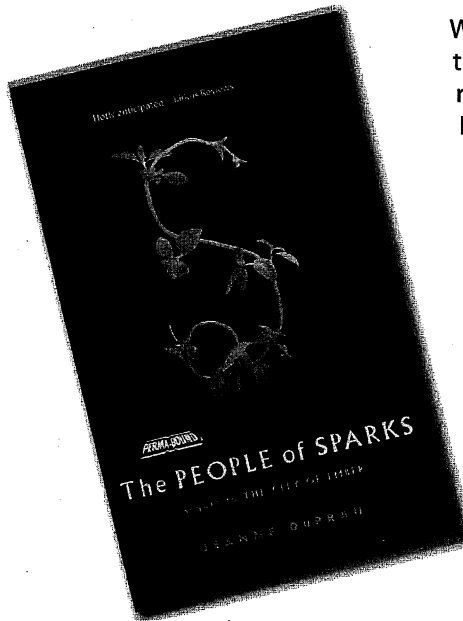
6. BREAKFAST WITH DISASTER

When Dr. Hester gives Lina the only egg the hens have laid that morning, Torren reacts with anger, sparking a fight with Lina. She throws the egg at him and it is wasted. Lina decides that Dr. Hester is nice but very distracted and poorly-organized. She is the only doctor for more than 700 people now, and also cares for her sister's children, Torren and Caspar. Caspar, older, is off scavenging from the suburbs destroyed in the Disaster. Dr. Hester explains how Sparks was founded. Torren is shocked that Lina doesn't know about the Three Plagues and Four Wars, the "Disaster" that nearly wiped out humankind. Torren shares his knowledge of the pre-Disaster world. It was a world like

ours, technologically-advanced with skyscrapers, telephones, and movies. Torren is confident that the village of Sparks will be safe because it has the terrible Weapon. He doesn't explain what the Weapon is or how it works.

7. A DAY OF NEW PEOPLE

Work and food teams are organized. The Emberites find the work brutally hard. Lina and her family eat lunch with the Polster family. As with the other inhabitants of Sparks, the Polsters hesitantly share their food with their less-than-welcome guests. Tick Hassler, an Emberite, praises Doon for his bravery in rescuing the Emberites. Tick has grand plans.



The People of Sparks Jeanne DuPrau

8. THE ROAMER AND THE BIKE

Torren explains that his brother Caspar is a roamer, one who ventures into the Empty Lands and brings things back. Torren adores Caspar. Lina is delighted when Dr. Hester gives her an old bicycle, and Lina quickly teaches herself to ride it.

9. HARD, HUNGRY WORK

The heat and work quickly wear down the Emberites. To his delight, Doon finds a building filled with books and in his spare time, reads voraciously. Food grows short and tempers fray.

10. RESTLESS WEEKS

Torren shows Lina some of his treasures from the Empty Lands. Lina resents being stuck at home doing housework and chores. She tries to help the village by throwing all the manure into the stream, to the utter disgust of the farmers who value it for fertilizer. This incident further convinces the people of Sparks that the Emberites are fools who will never learn anything.

11. TICK'S PROJECTS

Tick starts many exciting projects but never finishes any of them. Nonetheless, many Emberites follow him—even Doon. The Emberites hoist their flag over the hotel. The people of Sparks have a flag made and hoist it in the plaza. Relations between the two peoples deteriorates further.

12. CASPAR ARRIVES WITH A SURPRISE

Caspar's surprise is his new roaming partner Maddy. Lina notices that there is something slightly off about Caspar. The doctor confirms Lina's judgment: Caspar always brings back things of no value and has foolish plans. Now, he plans to rummage in the city. Lina decides to stow away with them.

13. TAKING ACTION

Lina hides in Caspar's truck, promising in a note to Mrs. Murdo to be back in a week.

Part 2: Travelers and Warriors

14. WHAT TORREN DID

Furious that Caspar won't take him to the city, Torren smashes two crates of precious tomatoes on a wall. He blames Doon for the waste, exacerbating tensions still further.

15. A LONG, HOT RIDE

Maddy discovers Lina and tells her that the journey alone is five days. Maddy is kind to Lina, in contrast to

Caspar's cruelty. Lina realizes that matches are rare among the people of Sparks, but abundant among the Emberites.

16. THE STARVING ROAMER

Maddy tells Lina that she realizes Caspar is a fool, but took up with him to escape from her poverty-stricken, hopeless village. A starving man asks for food. Maddy tries to convince Caspar to show charity, but he refuses. That night, the starving man steals some of their food and throws dirt on the rest.

17. DOON ACCUSED

All the Emberites feel the sting of the tomato incident. Someone writes "They Must Go" on the plaza wall. Kenny, the Polsters' ten year old son, realizes that Doon is innocent and recognizes his leadership and integrity. Kenny tells Doon that the people of Sparks are turning the Emberites out in winter, when they won't be able to grow any food. Acts of vandalism against the Emberites continue.

THE SECOND TOWN MEETING

Mary, Ben, and Wilmer vote that the Emberites no longer eat in the homes of the people of Sparks.

18. CASPAR'S QUEST

Caspar shares his deluded plan about finding treasure in the city.

19. UNFAIRNESS, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Chugger, a man from Sparks, treats Doon very badly as Doon cleans the fountain. As a result, Doon loses his temper and has a fight. Tick tries to convince Doon to storm the food stores.

20. THE CITY DESTROYED

Maddy, Lina, and Caspar find the city in utter ruin. Caspar is still determined to find the treasure, using Lina to crawl into the most dangerous places.

21. ATTACK AND COUNTERATTACK

Someone heaps trash and leaves in front of the Pioneer. Everyone but Tick helps clean it up. Soon, everyone but Tick has a bad case of poison oak from the leaves. Tick urges the Emberites to attack the people of Sparks.

22. DISCOVERIES

Maddy and Lina escape on their bicycles. Lina realizes that the beautiful city that haunts her dreams may be a vision of the future rather than the past. Maddy and Lina take up with another roamer, Pelton Moss. Lina

loves the work and finds many interesting things. Pelton sings her the fabled treasure song that drives Caspar and many others. Lina realizes that the "treasure" is the people of Ember themselves because they ensure that humanity will not vanish from earth.

THE THIRD TOWN MEETING

The council votes to expel the Emberites at once, not at the end of six months.

23. GETTING READY FOR WAR

Tick inflames the Emberites for war. Uneasy at Tick's bravado, Doon decides that he will command the people himself.

Part 3: The Decision

24. WHAT TORREN PLANNED

Torren decides to view the war from a big tree.

25. DREAD AT THE LAST MINUTE

Pelton offers Lina some of the objects she found. She takes a magnet, model car, and magnifying glass. She arrives back in Sparks, a month after she left. Doon is angry but they reconcile. She gives Doon the magnet and magnifying glass. They discuss ways to defuse the tension, but don't come up with anything concrete.

26. THE WEAPON

Half the Emberites join Tick, who starts the battle. The people of Sparks set off the Weapon, a machine gun. It explodes and the town catches on fire. Doon rescues Torren from the flames.

27. FIREFIGHT

Tick continues to foment revolution, but Lina comes up with a way to stop the conflict: she picks up a bucket and helps the people of Sparks save their village. Other Emberites join her. At last, only Tick and a few of his men are not helping save the village.

28. SURPRISING TRUTHS

Doon learns that Tick wrote the messages against the Emberites and planted the poison-oak laden trash in front of the Pioneer. Doon realizes that Tick needs the anger and outrage to get glory. Like Torren, he needs attention—no matter how negative. Lina gives the toy truck to Torren.

THE FOURTH TOWN MEETING

Doon tells the leaders about Tick's treachery. Lina reveals that Torren told her that Doon did not smash the tomatoes, although Torren will not admit that he did

it. Mary announces that they will renounce violence and unite with the people of Ember to become one village.

29. THREE AMAZING VISITS

Caspar returns and gives Torren a light bulb. Using the magnet, Doon makes a machine that generates electricity, which he demonstrates with the light bulb. It becomes a symbol of peace and prosperity.

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 publishes *The War of the Worlds*, the first depiction of an alien invasion of Earth.
- 1899** H.G. Wells publishes *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 publishes *The War in the Air*, the first prediction of air raids against cities.
- 1914** H.G. Wells publishes *The World Set Free*, the first prophecy of devastating nuclear wars that will end civilization.
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman publishes *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 takeover.
- 1925** Franz Kafka publishes *Der Prozess*, a pessimistic perspective on modern society that influences dystopian fiction.
- 1926** Fritz Lang's movie *Metropolis*, first dystopian movie.
- 1932** Aldous Huxley publishes *Brave New World*.

The People of Sparks Jeanne DuPrau

- 1948** George Orwell publishes *1984*, an 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 publishes *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 publishes *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 publishes *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 hyper-technology 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 steampunk 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 (pronounced "do pro") 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 Scripps 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 as well.

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.

She lives in Menlo Park, California, where she tends a large garden and a small dog.

Further Readings About the Author

- Booklist*. DuPrau, Jeanne. *The People of Sparks*. Sally Estes. April 15, 2004 v100 i16 p1453.
- The Horn Book Magazine* Jeanne DuPrau: *The People of Sparks*. Roger Sutton. July-August 2004 v80 i4 p450.
- Horn Book*, May-June, 2003, Roger Sutton, review of *The City of Ember*, p343.
- Kliatt, Review of *The People of Sparks*. Carol Kellerman. Jan. 2005, v39 i1 p48
- Kirkus Reviews* DuPrau, Jeanne: *The People of Sparks*. May 1, 2004, v72 i9 p441.
- New York Times*, June 22, 2003, Elizabeth Devereaux, review of *The City of Ember*.
- Publishers Weekly*. Review of *The People of Sparks*. March 1, 2004, v251 i9 p69.
- School Library Journal*. Review of *The People of Sparks*. Barbara Wsocki. Oct 2004 v50 i10 p84.
- School Library Journal*. Review of *The People of Sparks*. Beth L. Meister. May 2004 v50 i5 p146.

Critic's Corner

This much-anticipated sequel to *The City of Ember* was greeted with acclaim. Reviewing the novel for Amazon.com, for instance, Patty Campbell wrote: "In this exciting and solidly constructed sequel to *The City of Ember*, Jeanne DuPrau moves the story on entrancingly, bringing along her cast of characters from underground and adding new dimensions and relationships as the action escalates to a satisfying conclusion that still allows for further volumes in this fine fantasy." Barbara Wysocki, writing in *School Library Journal*, was equally positive. "This sequel ... deals with complex, compelling questions about survival in a world ravaged by wars and disease, and could be used to prompt discussions on ethics, or be tied into classroom study on current events."

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)
City of Ember (2004)
Car Trouble (2005)
The Prophet of Yonwood (2006)

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 ending
10. To describe the book's mood

Specific Objectives

1. To isolate 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 people of Sparks resent the people of Ember
5. To understand why Tick foments revolt

6. To assess the effect of hard work in a community's success
7. To compare and contrast Doon and Tick
8. To analyze the novel's tone
9. To understand how Lina and Doon bring the communities together
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:

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 People of Sparks* is set in a rural location at least 200 years in the future, a hard-scrabble colony established with some of the remnants of a world nearly destroyed by wars and plagues.

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 People of Sparks* is suspenseful. DuPrau creates the tense atmosphere by describing the growing conflicts between the people of Sparks and the people of Ember. The tension reaches its climax as the people of Sparks bring out the Weapon and fire it, setting the entire village on fire.

Symbolism: occurs 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 novel and an understanding of conventional literary and cultural symbols. *The People of Sparks* has many important symbols, the most noticeable being fire and light. Both are ambiguous, for they can both harm and heal. Sun and fire can burn and destroy, but the sun enables us to grow food and fire enables us to cook it. Lina is terrified of fire but she comes to see that it can be positive, if harnessed. Light, especially in the electricity and light bulb at the end of the novel, symbolize hope for peace and prosperity.

The Importance of Setting

The setting is crucial to *The People of Sparks* because in large part it determines the characters' survival. The setting also figures prominently in the development of the theme.

Some people who survived the Disaster – the Three Plagues and Four Wars—started a small village. These desperate farmers have struggled for years to survive. They endured through years of drought and insect invasions. Crop failures meant that people ate cabbage and potatoes for months on end – when they had any food at all. Some winters, people survived on little more than chopped roots and shriveled fruits. The people of Sparks know of only three other settlements, places even smaller and poorer than their own village. When the Emberites arrive, no one in Sparks wants the extra mouths to feed, but they take in the strangers nonetheless. Resentment builds and simmers.

The Emberites, meanwhile, find it difficult to adjust to life on Earth's surface. They are burned by the sun, stung by insects, and exhausted by hard physical work. They don't know how to deal with fire, plants, birds, and the vast sky. They are shocked that the people of Sparks don't have indoor plumbing or electricity, the conveniences of a modern civilization. Further, many are indignant at the food shortages and the anger of the people of Sparks. Resentment builds and simmers on their side as well.

The climax comes when Tick foments war. The people of Sparks retaliate by firing their Weapon, which sets the village ablaze. Lina bravely joins the people of Sparks in fighting the fire. Her action sets the stage for a fragile peace and the building of a new civilization. No one wants to repeat the actions that caused the Disaster.

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*
Patricia Reilly Giff, *Lily's Crossing*
Patricia Reilly Giff, *All the Way Home*
Patricia Reilly Giff, *Pictures of Hollis Woods*
Madeleine L'Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time*

C.S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia*
Lois Lowry, *The Giver*
Gloria Milowitz, *The War Between the Classes*
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

The People of Sparks (AudioFile, 2004)

Internet

Jeanne DuPrau - Official Website
www.jeanneduprau.com/index.shtml

Random House: Jeanne DuPrau
www.randomhouse.com

Teens@Random—Hang with the Authors! Jeanne DuPrau
www.randomhouse.com/teens/

Meet Jeanne DuPrau
www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kidscoops/story/0,14989,465394,00.html

Jeanne DuPrau - A biography.
www.bookbrowse.com/biographies/

City of Ember Web site
<http://www.jeanneduprau.com>

Themes and Motifs

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

Themes

- light and dark
- greed
- survival
- education

- the future
- family
- friendship
- science fiction
- symbolism
- war

Motifs

- being displaced from your home
- becoming a refugee in a strange land
- living in world nearly destroyed by wars and plagues
- experiencing prejudice
- dealing with greed and fear
- becoming a leader
- learning new skills
- understanding the causes and effects of war
- coping with being different from others
- understanding the conventions of science fiction

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. "We come from the city of Ember," the boy said. "We left there because our city was dying. We need help." (p. 9)
(Readers are plunged into the action as the approximately 400 citizens of Ember climb out of their underground city and enter the village of Sparks. The People of Sparks is the sequel to The City of Ember, which describes life in the dying underground city. Created to ensure the preservation of the human race in the face of great wars and plagues, the city of Ember had run out of food and all other supplies necessary for survival.)
2. "You don't know about the Three Plagues?" said Torren in a tone of exaggerated surprise. "Or the Four Wars? You've never heard of the Disaster?" (p. 73)
(Torren explains that the Three Plagues and the Four Wars together are called the Disaster. This was a time of terrible conflict in which nearly all people died and cities were destroyed. As a result of this tragedy, people have decided that they must never again have war. Of course, this proves ironic as the people of Sparks fire their Weapon to defeat the people of Ember and drive them off.)
3. He felt like a hungry person who had been led to

an immense banquet, far more food than he could eat in his whole life. (p. 110)

(The People of Sparks is a stridently anti-war novel. It is also assertively pro-literacy. In this scene, Doon delights in the vast treasury of books that he has found.)

4. But the idea that struck her was this: maybe the people of Ember were meant to restore the city. (p. 151)
(For much of her life, Lina has been dreaming of a great advanced city. When she sees the ruined city, she decides that perhaps her people have come to the new world on a mission to rebuild the city. Her idea may indeed come true, sometime in the distant future.)
5. Revenge, he'd called it. (p. 227)
(Maddy explains to Lina how the war had started that resulted in the Disaster and the near destruction of civilization. Lina realizes the strong parallel between the past and the present, as tension escalates between the people of Ember and Sparks—despite their vow never to war again.)
6. "It was us!" cried Lina. "We were the treasure, the people of Ember!" (p. 251)
(For decades, people have sung songs about the buried treasure of the ancient city. Caspar is certain the treasure is an object or a device of some sort. Lina realizes that the treasure is the people of Ember, "far more precious than diamonds and gold" because they will ensure the survival of the human race. After the Disaster, they could repopulate the earth if no one on the surface had survived.)
7. "Instead of getting back at the other side with something just as bad as they did to you—or something worse—you do something good." (p. 282)
(Brainstorming with Doon, Lina tries to think of ways to prevent war. She doesn't know how she will be able to do anything good to stop the war, but this is indeed what she does during the fire.)
8. She ran as if fighting a powerful wind, out across the plaza by herself, and when she reached the nearest bucket line she pushed her way in. (p. 303)
(Lina is the first Emberite to step forward and help the people of Sparks put out the fire. Many other Emberites join her and the town is saved. Lina has succeeded in uniting the people of Ember and the people of Sparks.)
9. Tick needed all that anger and outrage. (p. 310)
(Doon realizes that Tick wants power and glory. To attain them, he raises an army by attacking his own people. Readers can infer that it is "leaders" such as Tick who led the human race to near

The People of Sparks

Jeanne DuPrau

extinction during the Disaster in their megalomaniacal quest for domination.)

10. Full to the brim with hope and love and joy, she watched the little light bulb shining like a promise in the night. (p. 338)
(This is the last line in the novel. By ending on an uplifting note, the author suggests that people have indeed learned their lesson. There is hope that the human race will never again come as close to destroying itself.)

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 is set in a post-apocalyptic future in the small, isolated village of Sparks. It is about 200 years in the future.)
2. Why are the people of Ember so quiet when they arrive in Sparks?
(The people are in shock: they have never been above ground, have never seen the sun, felt the wind, or smelled the plants.)
3. How was Sparks started?
(The People of the Last Truck, the village's twenty-two founders, were among the very few who survived the Disaster. For a while they found food driving from place to place. When their food and gas ran out, they decided to set down roots. They found one last truck with gas, loaded it up, and drove until the truck broke down. When they opened the hood, a shower of sparks flew out. They decided to name the village "Sparks.")
4. What is a roamer?
(A roamer is a person who goes out to the Empty Lands and brings things back.)
5. Name the gifts from Caspar that Torren treasures.
(He treasures a model airplane, a model tank, a model motorcycle, a small flashlight, a remote control, and a small stuffed elephant.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. What caused the war that nearly destroyed the planet?
(Readers can infer that it was caused by greed and a lust for power and glory, the emotions that drive Tick and other corrupt leaders like him.)

7. What qualities make Doon a fine leader?
(He is brave but not foolhardy, thoughtful but not indecisive, eager to learn but not didactic. He has integrity.)
8. What is the theme or main idea of this book?
(The theme is the importance of taking care of our environment, of protecting people from destruction by resolving potentially dangerous conflicts peacefully.)

Questions 9-10 (Critical Level)

9. Do you think this is a realistic book? Why or why not?
(Yes, because the world has stood on the brink of potential annihilation several times in the 20th century alone. The world's arsenal of nuclear weapons proves that we have the power to kill all life on Earth and perhaps even wipe out the human race.)
10. Which character did you find the most interesting? Why?
(Students are apt to find Tick most interesting because his evilness is compelling. As with many dictators and potential dictators, he is charismatic.)

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. With some classmates, create a mural showing the progress of the people of Ember and Sparks from the day they come together to 200 years in the future. Do they succeed in rebuilding the cities?

Across the Curriculum

Art/Music

1. Make a model of the village of Sparks.
2. Create a travel brochure for Sparks.
3. Write a national anthem to represent the people of Sparks and Ember, once they unite.
4. Draw Lina's vision of the beautiful city, the pictures that she keeps drawing from her dreams.
5. Find an anti-war song from the Civil War, World War I, or World War II. Analyze the song to determine if it applies to the world described in this novel.

Language Arts

1. Study the Martin Luther King, Jr. quote that opens the novel. Argue that it does or does not fit the novel's theme.
2. Lina and Doon write a note to the people in Ember, telling them about the escape. Write another version of the note.
3. The Emberites learn many new words, such as "plaza" and "pinetree." Make a glossary of 100 words a person from Ember would need to know to adjust to life in your neighborhood.
4. Sparks has its own traditions, such as the Town Meeting. Create a new tradition that you believe will benefit many Americans.
5. Read another dystopic novel, such as George Orwell's *1984*. Compare and contrast it to *The People of Sparks*.
6. 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.
7. Explain the symbolism of the word "sparks." Does the name fit the village? Why or why not?

History/Social Studies

1. Lina suggests that the Emberites sit down and refuse to work. This is called "passive resistance." Find out more about nonviolence and passive resistance, especially as practiced by Mohandes Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
2. In some ways, Sparks is a utopian community, as its members work together for the common good. Research the history of a real utopian community such as the 19th century Brook Farm.
3. In an essay, define "community." Include information about the rights and responsibilities of each member of the community.
4. On a map, locate another "lost" city such as the ruins of an ancient Greek city.
5. Jeanne DuPrau says that she got the idea for this book and *The City of Ember* from the fallout shelters of the 1950s. Explain why these shelters were built.

Science/Math

1. Imagine a world with no technology. How would your world change? Show your results on a poster.
2. Torren likes to play on the wind towers. Research wind power. Find out how it works, where wind power has been successful, and whether the same technology would work in your state.
3. Three plagues nearly wiped out humankind. Explain what "plague" is, how it is spread, and how it is treated. Make a chart showing the number of people who died from the plague during the Middle Ages.
4. Lina is shocked when she sees fog. Explain what causes fog. If possible, make some fog for the class.
5. All the Emberites get sunburned. Make a poster that shows the dangers of sunburn and how to sunbathe safely.
6. Is it possible that Lina could remember something that she has never experienced, such as the beautiful city? Report on memory. How are memories formed?
7. Research the fundamentals of electricity. How does it work? Create a brochure listing ways that people can avoid wasting electricity.
8. Create your own garden, including some of the plants the people of Sparks use as major food sources.

Speech/Drama

1. *The People of Sparks* is the sequel to *The City of Ember*. Read *The City of Ember* and explain in a speech what new information it adds to your understanding of *The People of Sparks*.
2. In a roundtable discussion, explore some ways to deal with the people of Ember when they arrive in Sparks.
3. Imagine that you are helping to create the blended community of Ember and Sparks. Working with some classmates, write the rules for this new community.
4. Working with a group, act out the scene in which

Doon demonstrates his electricity machine.

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 rescue scene. Working with some classmates, perform the scene.

Alternate Assessment

1. Make a three-dimensional model of the city of Sparks.
2. Create an organization to help protect the world and resolve disputes.
3. Debate whether or not war can really be prevented.

Teacher's Notes

Vocabulary

Complete the chart by writing as many synonyms and antonyms as you can for each word from *The People of Sparks*.

Word	Synonyms	Antonyms
1. shrill	_____	_____
2. urgent	_____	_____
3. vague	_____	_____
4. bedraggled	_____	_____
5. scrawny	_____	_____
6. hoist	_____	_____
7. refugee	_____	_____
8. ecstasy	_____	_____
9. listless	_____	_____
10. ointment	_____	_____
11. feeble	_____	_____
12. diligent	_____	_____
13. adversity	_____	_____
14. drought	_____	_____
15. extinct	_____	_____

The People of Sparks Jeanne DuPrau

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. Mary Waters |
| C. Tick Hassler | H. Pelton Moss |
| D. Edward Pocket | I. Mrs. Murdo |
| E. Maddy | J. Sadge Merrall |

- ___ 1. The young man who stirs up trouble so he can be the leader
- ___ 2. The teenager who brings the two sides together when she starts fighting the fire
- ___ 3. A fearful, trembling man
- ___ 4. Lina's younger sister
- ___ 5. The Emberite who works as a librarian
- ___ 6. The kindly neighbor who takes in Lina and Poppy after their grandmother dies
- ___ 7. A roamer who looks for treasures in the Empty Lands
- ___ 8. Caspar's fellow roamer; she and Lina leave Caspar to return to Sparks
- ___ 9. One of the leaders of Sparks, a kind and compassionate woman
- ___ 10. The Emberite who rescues Torren from the fire

Part II. Identification (20 points)

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

- 1. magnet
- 2. bicycles
- 3. fire
- 4. the treasure rhyme
- 5. the bird that Tick kills

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III. True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F for false.

- 1. Five-year-old Kenny is the first to see the people of Ember emerge from underground.
- 2. The mayor of Ember and his guards drowned as they attempted to escape and leave everyone behind.
- 3. Lina and her family are taken to the home of Dr. Hester because Poppy is so ill.
- 4. Sparks does not have enough food to feed all the extra people.
- 5. The people of Sparks try to learn as much as they can from the brilliant, advanced people of Ember.
- 6. Caspar always brings back things of no value and has crackbrain plans.
- 7. Maddy and Caspar graciously share their food with a starving man, who rewards them with a treasure map.
- 8. Tick leaves trash and poison oak leaves in front of the Pioneer to stir up anger against the people of Sparks.
- 9. Lina brings a magnet, model car, and magnifying glass back to Sparks.
- 10. The village of Sparks is destroyed by the Weapon.

Part IV. Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. What is the author's message about war in this novel?
- 2. Summarize the events in *The People of Sparks*.
- 3. How do greed, fear, and lust for power escalate into a conflict?
- 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. About **(400, 4,000)** people from Ember struggle up the tunnel to emerge in the village of Sparks.
2. **(Dr. Hester, Mary Waters)**, Ben Barlow, and Wilmer Dent govern Sparks.
3. Lina's family is comprised of her sister **(Hattie, Poppy)**, her neighbor Mrs. Murdo, Doon Mayfleet, and his father.
4. The Emberite are given shelter in an old hotel called the **(Pioneer, Gates)**.
5. The council decides that the Emberites will be allowed to live in Sparks for six **(months, years)**.
6. The world was nearly destroyed in a series of wars and plagues the people call the **(End, Disaster)**.
7. Lina learns to ride a **(horse, bicycle)**, to her delight.
8. Furious that Caspar won't take him to the city, Torren smashes two crates of **(apples, tomatoes)** on a wall.
9. Lina realizes that **(matches, books)** are rare among the people of Sparks, but abundant among the people of Ember.
10. Someone writes **("Welcome, Strangers," "They Must Go")** on the plaza wall.

Part II. Identification (20 points)

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

1. matches
2. the sun
3. tomatoes
4. the light bulb
5. travelers' cakes

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III. True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F for false.

- 1. Sparks is home to 322 people.
- 2. Fortunately, there are many doctors in Sparks.
- 3. Torren is warm and friendly to the newcomers.
- 4. Lina decides that Dr. Hester is nice but very distracted and poorly-organized.
- 5. Caspar is a serious and well-respected member of the Ember community.
- 6. To his delight, Doon finds a building filled with books and in his spare time, reads voraciously.
- 7. When the people of Ember hoist their flag over the hotel, the people of Sparks have a flag made and hoist it in the plaza.
- 8. When a starving man asks for food, Caspar shares their travelers' cakes, but Maddy refuses to do so.
- 9. Tick incites mob violence, urging the Emberites to attack with shards of glass and metal poles.
- 10. Tick is killed in the big battle and later celebrated as a great hero of the revolution.

Part IV. Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain how the situation in Sparks parallels the situation that nearly resulted in the destruction of the world.
2. Argue that the name "Sparks" does or does not fit the village.
3. Do the community rulers act as good leaders? Why or why not? How would you have acted in their place?
4. Identify two characters whom you believe were heroic in the novel. Give specific reasons from the book to justify your choices.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

Word	Synonyms	Antonyms
1. shrill	sharp, high-pitched, ear-splitting	soothing, mild, calm
2. urgent	immediate, pressing	nonessential, irrelevant
3. vague	obscure, imprecise	clear, definite, certain
4. bedraggled	messy	neat
5. scrawny	skinny, emaciated	robust
6. hoist	lift up	put down
7. refugee	expatriate	citizen
8. ecstasy	rapture, delight, bliss	misery, despair, sorrow
9. listless	languid, lethargic	involved, energetic
10. ointment	salve, balm	harsh
11. feeble	weak, frail	robust
12. diligent	hard working	lazy
13. adversity	hardship	good times, prosperity
14. drought	lack of water	flood
15. extinct	archaic, vanished	vibrant, timely, relevant

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)

- Lina finds the magnet while roaming with Pelton Moss. She gives it to Doon, who uses it to complete the device for making electricity. This represents hope that the people of Sparks and Ember may one day rebuilt the glorious cities destroyed in the Disaster.
- Some of the people of Sparks travel on bicycles. Dr. Hester gives one Lina, to the girl's delight. She loves the feeling of moving fast.
- Fire can harm or help. It harms by nearly destroying Sparks; it helps by heating homes and enabling people to cook their food.
- The treasure rhyme is one of the clues to the hidden people of Ember. They are the real treasure because they represent the future of humanity.
- Tick carelessly kills a small bird. This shows his disregard for life.

Part III. True/False (20 points)

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

Part IV. Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I. Sentence Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. 400 | 6. Disaster |
| 2. Mary Waters | 7. bicycle |
| 3. Poppy | 8. tomatoes |
| 4. Pioneer | 9. matches |
| 5. months | 10. "They Must Go" |

Part II. Identification (20 points)

- Matches are valuable because they start fires quickly and safely. The people of Ember have many matches; the people of Sparks do not. Eventually, matches serve as a form of money as the people trade goods and services.
- The sun astonishes the people of Ember, who have never before equated heat and light. They all get sunburned, too.
- Torren smashes two crates of tomatoes on the wall. He says that Doon did it, which further exacerbates tensions between the people of Ember and the people of Sparks.
- The light bulb is useless until Doon reinvents electricity. Then it becomes a symbol of hope and progress.
- Roamers eat travelers' cakes, a hard mass that keeps well. When Caspar refuses to share his food with a starving man, the man steals some of their travelers' cakes and heaps dirt on the rest. This reveals the Caspar's cruelty and desperate lengths that starving people are often forced to go.

Part III. True/False (20 points)

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

Part IV. Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

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