

Monday 27th April 2020

Read each sentence below and figure out the meaning of the underlined word. Then compare your definition to a dictionary definition. The first one has been started for you. Then write your own sentence using synonyms!

1. I couldn't sleep because there was a raucous going on in the party next door.

*I think 'raucous' means The dictionary says 'raucous' means
The party sounded very loud and wild.*

2. The boat kept bouncing up and down and side to side as it sailed through the turbulent waters.
3. The earthquake left a chasm into which the hut fell.
4. Every member of the board was in attendance for the meeting.
5. After running around in circles, the dog was enmeshed in the rope used to tie him to the tree.
6. People often become disagreeable when they are tired.
7. After she awoke from the surgery, she was speaking incoherently.

Now read the next chapter (below). Be ready to answer questions about it soon:

City of Ember - CHAPTER 3

Under Ember

That morning, Doon had arrived at the Pipeworks full of anticipation. This was the world of serious work at last, where he would get a chance to do something useful. What he'd learned in school, and from his father, and from his own investigations—he could put it all to good purpose now.

He pushed open the heavy Pipeworks door and stepped inside. The air smelled strongly of dampness and mouldy rubber, which seemed to him a pleasant, interesting smell. He strode up a hallway where yellow slickers hung from pegs on the walls. At the end of the hallway was a room full of people, some of them sitting on benches and pulling on knee-high rubber boots, some struggling into their slickers, some buckling on tool belts. A raucous clamour filled the room. Doon watched from the doorway, eager to join in but not sure what to do.

After a moment a man emerged from the throng. He thrust out a hand. "Lister Munk, Pipeworks director," he said. "You're the new boy, right? What size feet do you have—large, medium, or small?"

"Medium," said Doon, and Lister found him a slicker and a pair of boots. The boots were so ancient that their green rubber was cracked all over, as if covered with spiderwebs. He gave Doon a tool belt, too, in which were wrenches and hammers, spools of wire and tape, and tubes of some sort of black goop.

“You’ll be in Tunnel 97 today,” Lister said. “Arlin Froll will go down with you and show you what to do.” He pointed at a short, delicate-looking girl with a white-blond braid down her back. “She may not look like an expert, but she is.”

Doon buckled his tool belt around his waist and put on his slicker, which, for some reason, smelled like sweaty feet. “This way,” said Arlin, without saying hello or smiling. She wove through the crowd of workers to a door marked “Stairway” and opened it.

Stone steps led so far down that Doon couldn’t see the end of them. On either side was a sheer wall of dark reddish stone, glistening with dampness. There was no railing. Along the ceiling ran a single wire from which a light bulb hung every few yards. Water stood in shallow pools on each stair, in the hollow worn into the stones by years of footsteps.

They started down. Doon concentrated on his feet—the clumsy boots made it hard not to stumble. As they went deeper, he began to hear a low roar, so low he seemed to hear it more with his stomach than his ears. It grew louder and louder— was it a machine of some kind? Maybe the generator?

The stairway came to an end at a door marked “Main Tunnel.” Arlin opened it, and as they stepped through, Doon realized that the sound he had been hearing wasn’t a machine. It was the river.

He stood still, staring. Like most people, he had never been really sure what a river was—just that it was water that somehow flowed on its own. He’d imagined it would be like the clear, narrow stream that came out of the kitchen faucet, only bigger, and horizontal instead of vertical. But this was something entirely different—not a stream of water, but endless tons of it pouring by. Wide as the widest street in Ember, churning and dipping and swirling, the river roared past, its turbulent surface like black, liquid glass scattered with flecks of light. Doon had never seen anything that moved so fast, and he had never heard such a thunderous, heart-stopping roar.

The path they stood on was about six feet wide and ran parallel to the river for farther than Doon could see in both directions. In the wall along the path were openings that must lead, Doon thought, to the tunnels that branched everywhere below the city. A string of lights like the one in the stairway hung high up against the arched ceiling.

Doon knew he was standing beneath the north edge of Ember. In school, you were taught to remember the directions this way: north was the direction of the river; south was the direction of the greenhouses; east was the direction of the school; and west was the direction left over, having nothing in particular to mark it. All the Pipeworks tunnels branched off from the main tunnel to the south, toward the city.

Arlin leaned toward Doon and shouted into his ear. “First we’ll go to the beginning of the river,” she said. She led him up the main tunnel for a long way. They passed other people in yellow slickers, who greeted Arlin with a nod and glanced curiously at Doon. After fifteen minutes or so, they came to the east edge of the Pipeworks, where the river

surged up from a deep chasm in the ground, churning so violently that its dark water turned white and filled the air with a spray that wet Doon's face.

In the wall to their right was a wide double door. "See that door right there?" Arlin shouted, pointing.

"Yes," Doon shouted back.

"That's the generator room."

"Can we go in?"

"Of course not!" said Arlin. "You have to have special permission." She pointed back down the main tunnel. "Now we'll go to the end of the river," she said.

She led him back, past the stairway door, all the way to the west edge of the Pipeworks. There the river flowed into a huge opening in the wall and vanished into darkness.

"Where does it go?" Doon asked.

Arlin just shrugged. "Back into the ground, I guess. Now let's find Tunnel 97 and get to work." She pulled a folded piece of paper from her pocket. "This is the map," she said. "You have one in your pocket, too. You have to use the map to find your way around in here." The map looked to Doon like an immense centipede —the river arched across the top of the page like the centipede's body, and the tunnels dangled down from it like hundreds of long, long legs all tangled up with each other.

To get to Tunnel 97, they followed a complicated route through passageways lined with crusty, rusted pipes that carried water to all the buildings of Ember. Puddles stood on the floor of the tunnel, and water dripped in brown rivulets down the walls. Just as in the main tunnel, there was a string of bulbs along the ceiling that provided dim light. Doon occupied his mind by calculating how far underground he was. From the river to the ceiling of the main tunnel must be thirty feet or so, he thought. Above that were the storerooms, which occupied a layer at least twenty feet high. So that meant he was fifty feet underground, with tons of earth and rock and buildings above him. The thought made him tense up his shoulders. He cast a quick glance upward, as if all that weight might collapse onto his head.

"Here we are," said Arlin. She was standing next to a leak that spurted a stream of water straight out from the wall. "We have to turn the shut-off valve, take the pipe apart, put on a new connector, and stick it back together again."

With wrenches, hammers, washers, and black goop, they did this, getting soaked in the process. It took them most of the morning and proved to Doon that the city was in even worse shape than he'd suspected. Not only were the lights about to fail and the supplies

about to run out, but the water system was breaking down. The whole city was crumbling, and what was anyone doing about it?

When the lunch break came, Arlin took her lunch sack from a pocket in her tool belt and went off to meet some friends a few tunnels away. “You stay right here and wait until I get back,” she said as she left. “If you wander around, you’ll get lost.”

But Doon set out as soon as she disappeared. Using his map, he found his way back to the main tunnel, then hurried to the east end. He wasn’t going to wait for special permission to see the generator. He was pretty sure he could find a way to get in on his own, and he did. He simply stood by the door and waited for someone to come out. Quite soon, a stout woman carrying a lunch sack pushed open the door and walked away. She didn’t notice him. Before the door could close again, Doon slipped inside.

Such a horrendous noise met him that he staggered backward a few steps. It was an ear-splitting, growling, grinding, screaming noise, shot through with a hoarse *rackety-rackety* sound and underscored with a d e e p *chugga-chugga-chugga*. Doon clapped his hands over his ears and stepped forward. In front of him was a gigantic black machine, two stories high. It was vibrating so hard it looked as if it might explode any second. Several people wearing earmuffs were busy around it. None of them noticed him come in.

He tapped one of them on the shoulder, and the person jumped and whirled around. He was an old man, Doon saw, with a deeply lined brown face.

“I want to learn about the generator!” Doon screamed, but he might as well have saved his breath. No one could be heard in the uproar. The old man glared at him, made a shooping motion with his hand, and turned back to work.

Doon stood and watched for a while. Beside the huge machine were ladders on wheels that the workers pushed back and forth and climbed up on to reach the high parts. All over the room, greasy-looking cans and tools littered the floor. Against the walls stood big bins holding every kind of bolt and screw and gear and lever and rod and tube, all of them black with age and jumbled together. The workers scurried between the bins and the generator or simply stood and watched the thing shake.

After a few minutes, Doon left. He was horrified. All his life he had studied how things worked—it was one of his favourite things to do. He could take apart an old watch and put it back together exactly as it had been. He understood how the faucets in the sink worked. He’d fixed the toilet many times. He’d made a wheeled cart out of the parts of an old armchair. He even had a hazy idea of what was going on in the refrigerator. He was proud of his mechanical talent. There was only one thing he didn’t understand at all, and that was electricity. What was the power that ran through the wires and into the light bulbs? Where did it come from? He had thought that if he could just get a look at the generator, he would have the clue he needed. From there, he could begin to work on a solution that would keep the lights of Ember burning.

But one glimpse of the generator showed him how foolish he was. He'd expected to see something whose workings he could understand—a wheel turning, a spark being struck, some wires that led from one point to another. But this monstrous roaring thing—he wondered if *anyone* understood how it worked. It looked as if all they were doing was trying to keep it from flying apart.

As it turned out, he was right. When the day was over and he was upstairs taking off his boots and slicker, he saw the old man from the generator room and went to talk to him. "Can you explain to me about the generator?" he asked. "Can you tell me how it works?"

The old man just sighed. "All I know is, the river makes it go."

"But how?"

The man shrugged. "Who knows? Our job is just to keep it from breaking down. If a part breaks, we got to put on a new one. If a part freezes up, we got to oil it." He wiped his hand wearily across his forehead, leaving a streak of black grease. "I been working on the generator for twenty years. It's always managed to chug along, but this year . . . I don't know. The thing seems to break down every couple minutes." He cracked a wry smile. "Of course, I hear we might run out of light bulbs before that, and then it won't matter if the generator works or not."

Running out of light bulbs, running out of power, running out of time—disaster was right around the corner. That's what Doon was thinking about when he stopped outside the Gathering Hall on his way home and saw Lina on the roof. She looked so free and happy up there. He didn't know why she was on the roof, but he wasn't surprised. It was the kind of thing she did, turning up in unexpected places, and now that she was a messenger, she could go just about anywhere. But how could she be so light-hearted when everything was falling apart?

He headed for home. He lived with his father in a two-bedroom apartment over his father's shop in Greengate Square—the Small Items shop, which sold things like nails, pins, tacks, clips, springs, jar lids, doorknobs, bits of wire, shards of glass, chunks of wood, and other small things that might be useful in some way. The Small Items shop had overflowed somewhat into their apartment above. In their front room, where other people might display a nice teapot on a tabletop or a few attractive squashes or tomatoes on a shelf, they had buckets and boxes and baskets full of spare items for the shop, things Doon's father had collected but not yet organized for selling. Often these items spilled over onto the floor. It was easy to trip over things in this apartment, and not a good idea to go barefoot.

Today Doon didn't stop in at the shop to see his father before going upstairs. He wasn't in the mood for conversation. He removed two buckets of stuff from the couch—it looked like mostly shoe heels—and flopped down on the cushions. He'd been stupid to think he could understand the generator just by looking at it, when other people had

been working on it their entire lives. The thing was, he had to admit, he'd always thought he was smarter than other people. He'd been sure he could learn about electricity and help save the city. He wanted to be the one to do it. He had imagined many times a ceremony in Harken Square, organized to thank him for saving Ember, with the entire population in attendance and his father beaming from the front row. All Doon's life, his father had been saying to him, "You're a good boy and a smart boy. You'll do grand things someday, I know you will." But Doon hadn't done much that was grand so far. He ached to do something truly important, like finding the secret of electricity, and, as his father watched, be rewarded for his achievement. The size of the reward didn't matter. A small certificate would do, or maybe a badge to sew on his jacket.

Now he was stuck in the muck of the Pipeworks, patching up pipes that would leak and break again in a matter of days. It was even more useless and boring than being a messenger. The thought made him suddenly furious. He sat up, grabbed a shoe heel out of the bucket at his feet, and hurled it with all his might. It arrived at the front door just as the door opened. Doon heard a hard *thwack* and a loud "Ouch!" at the same moment. Then he saw the long, lean, tired-looking face of his father in the doorway.

Doon's anger drained away. "Oh, I hit you, Father. I'm sorry."

Doon's father rubbed the side of his head. He was a tall man, bald as a peeled potato, with a high forehead and a long chin. He had kind, slightly puzzled grey eyes.

"Got me in the ear," he said. "What *was* that?"

"I got angry for a second," said Doon. "I threw one of these old heels."

"I see," said his father. He brushed some bottle tops off a chair and sat down. "Does it have to do with your first day at work, son?"

"Yes," said Doon.

His father nodded. "Why don't you tell me about it," he said.

Doon told him. When he was finished, his father ran a hand across his bald head as if smoothing down the hair that wasn't there. He sighed. "Well," he said, "it sounds unpleasant, I have to admit. About the generator, especially—that's bad news. But the Pipeworks is your assignment, no way around it. What you get is what you get. What you *do* with what you get, though . . . that's more the point, wouldn't you say?" He looked at Doon and smiled, a bit sadly.

"I guess so," Doon said. "But what can I do?"

"I don't know," said his father. "You'll think of something. You're a clever boy. The main thing is to pay attention. Pay close attention to everything, notice what no one else

notices. Then you'll know what no one else knows, and that's always useful." He took off his coat and hung it from a peg on the wall. "How's the worm?" he asked.

"I haven't looked at it yet," said Doon. He went into his room and came out with a small wooden box covered with an old scarf. He set the box on the table and took the scarf off, and he and his father both bent over to look inside.

A couple of limp cabbage leaves lay on the bottom of the box. On one of the leaves was a worm about an inch long. A few days before school ended, Doon had found the worm on the underside of a cabbage leaf he was slicing up for dinner. It was a pale soft green, velvety smooth all over, with tiny stubby legs.

Doon had always been fascinated by bugs. He wrote down his observations about them in a book he had titled *Crawling and Flying Things*. Each page of the book was divided lengthwise down the center. On the left he drew his pictures, with a pencil sharpened to a needle-like point: moth wings with their branching patterns of veins; spider legs, which had minute hairs and tiny feet like claws; beetles, with their feelers and their glossy armour. On the right, he wrote what he observed about each creature. He noted what it ate, where it slept, where it laid its eggs, and—if he knew—how long it lived.

This was difficult with fast-moving creatures like moths and spiders. To learn anything about them, he had to catch what glimpses he could as they lived their lives out in the open. If he put them in a box, they scrambled around for a few days and then died.

This worm, though, was different. It seemed perfectly happy to live in the box Doon had made for it. So far, it did only three things: eat, sleep (it looked like sleeping, though Doon couldn't tell if the worm closed its eyes—or even if it had eyes), and expel tiny black poop balls. That was it.

"I've had it for five days now," said Doon. "It's twice as big as it was when I got it. It's eaten two square inches of cabbage leaf."

"You're writing all this down?"

Doon nodded.

"Maybe," said his father, "you'll find some interesting new bugs in the Pipeworks."

"Maybe," said Doon. But to himself he said, No, that's not enough. I can't go plodding around the Pipeworks, stopping up leaks, looking for bugs, and pretending there's no emergency. I have to find something important down there, something that's going to help. I have to. I just *have* to.