

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020

The sentence below appears in Chapter 4.

*Every day a team of people methodically sorted through the trash heaps in search of anything that might be at all useful.*

The word 'methodically' means order or systematic.

Draw a table like this in your book (2 columns, 7 lines):

Synonyms to Methodically	Antonyms to Methodically
	randomly

Read the words in the list below and sort them into two groups. 6 words that are synonyms (mean the same as) and 6 words that are antonyms (mean the opposite). List them in your table. The first one has been done for you.

randomly	logically	carefully	accidentally	meticulously	haphazardly
systematically	aimlessly	at random	precisely	by chance	deliberately

Now write your own sentence using the word 'methodically'.

**READ CHAPTER 4 of The City of Ember.**

## CHAPTER 4

### *Something Lost, Nothing Found*

One day when Lina had been a messenger for several weeks, she came home to find that Granny had thrown all the cushions from the couch onto the floor, ripped up a corner of the couch's lining, and was pulling out wads of stuffing.

"What are you doing?" Lina cried.

Granny looked up. Wisps of sofa stuffing stuck to the front of her dress and clung to her hair. "Something is lost," she said. "I think it might be in here."

"What's lost, Granny?"

"I don't quite recall," said the old woman. "Something important."

"But Granny, you're ruining the couch. What will we sit on?"

Granny tore a bit more of the covering off the couch and yanked out another puff of stuffing. "It doesn't matter," she said. "I'll put it back together later."

"Let's put it back now," Lina said. "I don't think what's lost is in there."

"You don't know," said Granny darkly. But she sat back on her heels, looking tired.

Lina began cleaning up the mess. "Where's the baby?" she asked.

Granny gazed at Lina blankly. "The baby?"

"You haven't forgotten the baby?"

"Oh, yes. She's . . . I think she's down in the shop."

"By herself?" Lina stood up and ran down the stairs. She found Poppy sitting on the floor of the shop, enmeshed in a tangle of yellow yarn. As soon as she saw Lina, Poppy began to howl.

Lina picked her up and unwound the yarn, talking soothingly, though she was so upset that her fingers trembled. For Granny to forget the baby was dangerous. Poppy could fall downstairs and hurt herself. She could wander out into the street and get lost. Granny had been forgetful lately, but this was the first time she'd completely forgotten about Poppy.

When they got upstairs, Granny was kneeling on the floor gathering up the white tufts of stuffing and jamming them back into the hole she'd made in the couch. "It wasn't in there," she said sadly.

"*What* wasn't?"

"It was lost a long time ago," said Granny. "My father told me about it."

Lina sighed impatiently. More and more, her grandmother's mind seemed caught in the past. She could explain the rules of pebblejacks, which she'd last played when she was eight, or tell you what happened at the Singing when she was twelve, or who she'd danced with at the Cloving Square Dance when she was sixteen, but she would forget what had happened the day before yesterday.

"They heard him talking about it when he died," she said to Lina.

"They heard who talking?"

"My grandfather. The seventh mayor."

“And what did they hear him say?”

“Ah,” said her grandmother with a faraway look. “That’s the mystery. He said he couldn’t get at it. ‘Now it is lost,’ he said.”

“But what *was* it?”

“He didn’t say.”

Lina gave up. It didn’t matter anyway. Probably the lost thing was the old man’s left sock, or his hairbrush. But for some reason, the story had taken root in Granny’s mind.

The next morning on her way to work, Lina stopped in at the house of their neighbour, Evaleen Murdo. Mrs. Murdo was brisk in her manner, and in her person thin and straight as a nail, but she was kind in her unsmiling way. Until a few years ago, she’d run a shop that sold paper and pencils. But when paper and pencils became scarce, her shop closed. Now she spent her days sitting by her upstairs window, watching people in the street with her sharp eyes. Lina told Mrs. Murdo about her grandmother’s forgetfulness. “Will you look in on her sometimes and make sure things are all right?” she asked.

“I will, certainly,” said Mrs. Murdo, nodding twice, firmly. Lina went away feeling better.

That day Lina was given a message by Arbin Swinn, who ran the Callay Street Vegetable Market, to be delivered to Lina’s friend Clary, the greenhouse manager. Lina was glad to carry this message, though her gladness was mixed a little with sadness. Her father had worked in the greenhouses. It still felt strange not to see him there.

The five greenhouses produced all of Ember’s fresh food. They were out past Greengate Square, at the farthest edge of the city. Nothing else was out there but the trash heaps, great mouldering, stinking hills that stood on rocky ground and were lit by a few floodlights high up on poles.

It used to be that no one went to the trash heaps but the trash collectors, who dumped the trash and left it. Now and then a couple of children might go there to play, scrambling up the side of the heaps and tumbling down. Lina and Lizzie used to go when they were younger. They’d pull out the occasional treasure—some empty cans, maybe an old hat or a cracked plate. But not anymore. Now there were guards posted at the trash heaps to make sure no one poked around. Just recently, an official job called trash sifter had been created. **Every day a team of people methodically sorted through the trash heaps in search of anything that might be at all useful.** They’d come back with broken chair legs that could be used for repairing window frames, bent nails that could become hooks for clothes, even filthy rags, stiff with dirt, that could be washed out and used to patch holes in window blinds or mattress covers. Lina hadn’t thought about it before, but now she wondered about the trash sifters. Were they there because Ember really was running out of everything?

Beyond the trash heaps there was nothing at all—that is, only the vast Unknown Regions, where the darkness was absolute.

From the end of Diggery Street, Lina could see the long, low greenhouses. They looked like big tin cans that had been cut in half and laid on their sides. Her breath came a little faster. The greenhouses were a home to her, in a way.

She knew that she was most likely to find Clary somewhere around Greenhouse 1, where the office was, so that was where she headed first. A small tool-shed stood beside the door to Greenhouse 1; Lina peeked into it but saw only rakes and shovels. So she opened the greenhouse door. Warm, furry-smelling air washed over her, and all her love for this place came rushing back. Out of habit, she gazed up toward the ceiling, as if she might see her father there on his ladder, tinkering with the sprinkler system, the temperature gauges, and the lights.

The greenhouse light was whiter than the yellowish light of the Ember streetlamps. It came from long tubes that ran the length of the ceiling. In this light, the leaves of the plants shone so green they almost hurt Lina's eyes. On the days when she'd come here with her father, Lina had spent hours wandering along the gravel paths that ran between the vegetable beds, sniffing the leaves, poking her fingers into the dirt, and learning to tell the plants apart by their look and smell. There were the beans and peas with their curly tendrils, the dark green spinach, the ruffled lettuce, and the hard, pale green cabbages, some of them as big as a newborn baby's head. What she loved best was to rub the leaves of the tomato plant between her fingers and breathe in their pungent, powdery smell.

A long, straight path led from one end of the building to the other. About halfway down the path, Clary was crouching by a bed of carrots. Lina ran toward her, and Clary smiled, brushed the dirt from her hands, and stood up.

Clary was tall and solid, with big hands and knobby knuckles. She had a square jaw and square shoulders, and brown hair cut in a short, squarish way. You might have thought from looking at her that she was a gruff, unfriendly person—but her nature was just the opposite. She was more comfortable with plants than with people, Lina's father had always said. She was strong but shy, a person of much knowledge but few words. Lina had always liked her. Even when she was little, Clary did not treat her like a baby but gave her jobs to do—pulling up carrots, picking bugs off cabbages. Since her parents had died, Lina had come many times to talk to Clary, or just to work silently beside her. Clary was always kind to her, and working with the plants took Lina's mind off her grief.

“Well,” said Clary. She smiled at Lina, wiped her hands on her already grimy pants, and smiled some more. Finally she said, “You're a messenger.”

“Yes,” said Lina, “and I have a message for you. It’s from Arbin Swinn. ‘Please add four extra crates to my order, two of potatoes and two of cabbages.’”

Clary frowned. “I can’t do that,” she said. “At least, I can send him the cabbages, but only one small crate of potatoes.”

“Why?” asked Lina.

“Well, we have a sort of problem with the potatoes.”

“What is it?” asked Lina. Clary had a habit of answering questions in the briefest possible way. You had to keep asking and asking before she would believe you really wanted to know and weren’t just being polite. Then she would explain, and you could see how much she knew, and how much she loved her work.

“I’ll show you,” she said. She led the way to a bed where the green leaves were spotted with black. “A new disease. I haven’t seen it before. When you dig up the potatoes, they’re runny inside instead of hard, and they stink. I’m going to have to throw out all the ones in this bed. There are only a few beds left that aren’t infected.”

Most people in Ember had potatoes at every meal—mashed, boiled, stewed, roasted. They’d had fried potatoes, too, in the days before the cooking oil ran out.

“I’d hate it if we couldn’t have potatoes anymore,” Lina said.

“I would, too,” said Clary.

They sat on the edge of the potato bed and talked for a while, about Lina’s grandmother and the baby, about the trouble Clary was having with the beehives, and about the greenhouse sprinkler system. “It hasn’t worked right since . . .” Clary hesitated and glanced sideways at Lina. “For a long time,” she said. She didn’t want to say “since your father died.” Lina understood that.

She stood up. “I should go,” she said. “I have to take Arbin Swinn the answer to his message.”

“I hope you’ll come again,” said Clary. “You can come whenever . . . you can come any time.” Lina said thank you and turned to go.

But just outside the greenhouse door, she heard running footsteps and a strange, high, sobbing sound. Or rather, she heard sobs and then a wail, sobs and then a shout, and then more sobs, getting louder. She looked back toward the rear of the greenhouses, toward the trash heaps. “Clary,” she called. “There’s something . . .”

Clary came out and listened, too.

“Do you hear it?”

“Yes,” said Clary. She frowned. “I’m afraid it’s . . . it’s someone who . . .” She peered toward the crying noise. “Yes . . . here he comes.” Her strong hand gripped Lina’s shoulder for a moment. “You’d better go,” she said. “I’ll take care of this.”

“But what is it?”

“Never mind. Just go on.”

But Lina wanted to see. Once Clary had walked away, she ducked behind the toolshed. From there she watched.

The noise came closer. Out beyond the trash heaps, a figure appeared. It was a man, running and stumbling, his arms flopping. He looked as if he was about to fall over, as if he could hardly pick up his feet. In fact, as he came closer he *did* fall. He tripped over a hose and crumpled to the ground as if his bones had dissolved.

Clary stooped down and said something to him in a voice too low for Lina to hear.

The man was panting. When he turned over and sat up, Lina saw that his face was scratched and his eyes wide open in fright. His sobs had turned into hiccups. She recognized him. It was Sadge Merrall, one of the clerks in the Supply Depot. He was a quiet, long-faced man who always looked worried.

Clary helped him to his feet. The two of them came slowly toward the greenhouse, and as they got closer Lina could hear what the man was saying. He spoke very fast in a weak, trembly voice, hardly stopping for breath. “. . . was sure I could do it. I said to myself, Just one step after another, that’s all, one step after another. I knew it would be dark. Who doesn’t know that? But I thought, Well, dark can’t hurt you. I’ll just keep going, I thought. . . .”

He stumbled and sagged against Clary. “Careful,” Clary said. They reached the door of the greenhouse, and Clary struggled to open it. Without thinking, Lina darted out from behind the toolshed and opened it for her. Clary shot her a quick frown but said nothing.

Sadge didn’t stop talking. “. . . But then the farther I went the darker it was, and you can’t just keep walking into black dark, can you? It’s like a wall in front of you. I kept turning around to look at the lights of the city, because that’s all there was to see, and then I’d say to myself, Don’t look back, keep moving. But I kept tripping and falling. . . . The ground is rough out there, I scraped my hands.” He held up one hand and stared at the red scratches on it, which oozed drops of blood.

They got him into Clary’s office and sat him down in her chair. He rambled on.

“Be brave, I said to myself. I kept going and going, but then all of a sudden I thought, Anything could be out here! There could be a pit a thousand feet deep right in front of me. There could be . . . something that bites. I’ve heard stories . . . rats as big as garbage bins . . . And I had to get out of there. So I turned around and I ran.”

“Never mind,” said Clary. “You’re all right now. Lina, get him some water.”

Lina found a cup and filled it from the sink in the corner. Sadge took it with a shaking hand and drank it down.

“What were you looking for?” Lina asked. She knew what *she* would have been looking for if she’d gone out there. She’d thought about it countless times.

Sadge stared at her. He seemed to have to puzzle over her question. Finally he said, “I was looking for something that could help us.”

“What would it be?”

“I don’t know. Like a stairway that leads somewhere, maybe. Or a building full of . . . I don’t know, useful things.”

“But you didn’t find anything? Or see anything?” Lina asked, disappointed.

“Nothing! Nothing! There is nothing out there!” His voice became a shout and his eyes looked wild again. “Or if there is, we can never get to it. Never! Not without a light.” He took a long, shaky breath. For a while he stared at the floor. Then he stood up. “I think I’m all right now. I’ll be going.”

With uncertain steps, he went down the path and out the door.

“Well,” said Clary. “I’m sorry that happened while you were here. I was afraid you might be scared, that’s why I told you to go.”

But Lina was full of questions, not fear. She had heard tales of people who tried to go out into the Unknown Regions. She had thought about it herself—in fact, she’d wondered the same things as Sadge. She had imagined making her way out into the dark and coming to a wall in which she would find the door to a tunnel, and at the end of the tunnel would be the other city, the city of light that she had dreamed about. All it would take was the courage to walk away from Ember and into the darkness, and then to keep going.

It might have been possible if you could carry a light to show the way. But in Ember, there was no such thing as a light you could carry with you. Outside lights were fixed to their poles, or to the roofs of houses; inside lights were set into the ceiling or had cords that had to be plugged in. Over the course of Ember’s history, various clever people had tried to invent a movable light, but all of them had failed. One man had managed to

ignite the end of a stick of wood by holding it against the electric burner on his stove. He'd run across the city with the flaming stick, planning to use it to light his journey. But by the time he got to the trash heaps, his torch had gone out. Other people latched on to his idea—one woman who lived on Dedlock Street, very near the edge of the city, managed to get into the Unknown Regions with her flaming stick. But the stick burned quickly, and before she could go far, the flame singed her hands and she threw it down. Everyone who had tried to penetrate the Unknown Regions had come back within a few hours, their enterprise a failure.

Lina and Clary stood by the open door of the greenhouse and watched Sadge shuffle toward the city. As he neared the trash heaps, two guards who had been sitting on the ground got to their feet. They walked over to Sadge, and each of them took hold of one of his arms.

"Uh-oh," said Clary. "Those guards are always looking for trouble."

"But Sadge hasn't broken any law," said Lina.

"Doesn't matter. They need something to do. They'll get some fun out of scaring him." One of the guards was shaking his finger at Sadge and saying something in a voice almost loud enough for Lina to hear. "Poor man," said Clary with a sigh. "He's the fourth one this year."

The guards were marching Sadge away now, one on either side of him. Sadge looked limp and small between them.

"What do you think is out in the Unknown Regions, Clary?"

Clary stared down at the ground, where the light from the greenhouse was casting long, thin shadows of them both. "I don't know. Nothing, I guess."

"And do you think Ember is the only light in the dark world?"

Clary sighed. "I don't know," she said. She gave Lina a long look. Her eyes, Lina thought, looked a little sad. They were a deep brown, almost the colour of the earth in the garden bed.

Clary put a hand in her pocket and drew something out. "Look," she said. In the palm of her hand was a white bean. "Something in this seed knows how to make a bean plant. How does it know that?"

"I don't know," said Lina, staring at the hard, flat bean.

"It knows because it has life in it," said Clary. "But where does life come from? What *is* life?"



Lina could see that words were welling up in Clary now; her eyes were bright, her cheeks were rosy.

“Take a lamp, for instance. When you plug it in, it comes alive, in a way. It lights up. That’s because it’s connected to a wire that’s connected to the generator, which is making electricity, though don’t ask me how. But a bean seed isn’t connected to anything. Neither are people. We don’t have plugs and wires that connect us to generators. What makes living things go is *inside* them somehow.” Her dark eyebrows drew together over her eyes. “What I mean is,” she said finally, something is going on that we don’t understand. They say the Builders made the city. But who made the Builders? Who made *us*? I think the answer must be somewhere outside of Ember.”

“In the Unknown Regions?”

“Maybe. Maybe not. I don’t know.” She brushed her hands together in a time-to-get-back-to-work way.

“Clary,” said Lina quickly, “here’s what I think.” Her heart sped up. She hadn’t told this to anyone before. “In my mind, I see another city.” Lina watched to see if Clary was going to laugh at her, or smile in that overly kind way. She didn’t, so Lina went on. “It isn’t like Ember; it’s white and gleaming. The buildings are tall and sort of sparkle. Everything is bright, not just inside the buildings but all around them, too, even up in the sky. I know it’s just my imagination, but it feels real. I think it *is* real.”

Clary said, “Hmmm,” and then she said, “Where would such a city be?”

“That’s what I don’t know. Or how to get to it. I keep thinking there’s a door somewhere, maybe out in the Unknown Regions—a door that leads out of Ember, and then behind the door a road.”

Clary just shrugged her shoulders. “I don’t know,” she said. “I have to get back to work. But here—take this.” She handed Lina the bean seed, took a little pot from a shelf, scooped some dirt into it, and handed the pot to Lina, too. “Stick the bean in here and water it every day,” she said. “It looks like nothing, like a little white stone, but inside it there’s life. That must be a sort of clue, don’t you think? If we could just figure it out.”

Lina took the seed and the pot. “Thank you,” she said. She wanted to give Clary a hug but didn’t, in case it would embarrass her. Instead, she just said goodbye and raced back toward the city.