

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Characterisation – Characters in literature are revealed by what they say and do and by what others say about them.

In your book, copy the table below and write the name of each character as they appear in the table. Finally, read the descriptions in the Physical appearance and the Personal traits then copy the correct descriptions in the correct place. Once you have done, tell me about one more character of your choice.

Character	Physical appearance	Personal traits
Lina	Grey faced man, whose eyes seem to look out on people from tunnels. He's very fat with a huge belly and small dangly arms	Strong, caring but shy. Quite intelligent and wise but not very talkative
Doon	Very thin woman, as straight as a nail	Very mother-like. She's caring, kind and very tidy
The Mayor	12 years old. Scruffy hair, dark thick eye brows	Protagonist, serious beyond his years, angry and pragmatic. Mechanically minded
Clary	12-years old. Thin, with long dark hair, loves to run	Greedy and selfish. A little scary and quite fiendish
Mrs Murdo	Solid looking woman, short brown hair and deep brown eyes, big hands and knobbly knuckles	Protagonist, extremely responsible, very happy, has great imagination

Read the next Chapter of the City of Ember.

## CHAPTER 5

### *On Night Street*

Granny's mind was getting more and more muddled. Lina would come home in the evenings and find her rifling through the kitchen cupboards, surrounded by cans and jars with their lids off, or tearing the covers off her bed and trying to lift up the mattress with her skinny arms. "It was an important thing," she would say, "the thing that was lost."

"But if you don't know what it was," said Lina, "how will you know when you've found it?"

Granny didn't try to answer this question. She just flapped her hands at Lina and said, "Never mind, never mind, never mind," and kept on searching.

These days, Mrs. Murdo spent a great deal of time sitting by their window rather than her own. She would tell Granny she was just coming to keep her company. "I don't want her to keep me company," Granny complained to Lina, and Lina said, "Maybe she's lonely, Granny. Let her come."

Lina rather liked having Mrs. Murdo around—it was a bit like having a mother there. She wasn't anything like Lina's own mother, who had been a dreamy, absentminded sort of person. Mrs. Murdo was mother-like in quite a different way. She made sure they all ate a good breakfast in the morning—usually potatoes with mushroom gravy and beet tea. She lined up the vitamin pills by each person's plate and made sure they were swallowed. When Mrs. Murdo was there, shoes got picked up and put away, spills were wiped off the furniture, and Poppy always had on clean clothes. Lina could relax when Mrs. Murdo was around. She knew things were taken care of.

Every week, Lina—like all workers between age twelve and age fifteen—had Thursday off. One Thursday, as she was standing in line at the Garn Square market, hoping to get a bag of turnips for stew that night, she overheard a startling conversation between two people standing behind her.

“What I wanted,” said one voice, “was some paint for my front door. It hasn't been painted for years. It's grey and peeling, horrible. I heard a store over on Night Street had some. I was hoping for blue.”

“Blue would be nice,” said the other voice wistfully.

“But when I got there,” the first voice continued, “the man said he had no paint, never had. Disagreeable man. All he had were a few coloured pencils.”

Coloured pencils! Lina had not seen coloured pencils in any store for ages. Once she'd had two red ones, a blue one, and a brown one. She'd used these for her drawing until they were stubs too small to hold. Now she had only one plain pencil left, and it was rapidly growing shorter.

She longed to have coloured pencils for her pictures of the imaginary city. She had a feeling it was a colourful place, though she didn't know what its colours might be. There were other things, of course, on which her money would be better spent. Granny's only coat was full of holes and coming apart at the seams. But Granny rarely went out, Lina told herself. She was either at home or in her yarn shop. She didn't really need a new coat, did she? Besides, how much could a few pencils cost? She could probably get a coat for Granny *and* some pencils.

So that afternoon she set out for Night Street. She took Poppy with her. Poppy had learned how to ride piggyback—she wrapped her legs around Lina's waist and gripped Lina's throat with her small, strong fingers.

On Budloe Street, people were standing in long lines with their bundles of laundry at the washing stations. The washers stirred the clothes in the washing machines with long poles. In days past, the machines themselves had whirled the clothes around, but not one of them worked anymore.

Lina turned up Hafter Street, where the four streetlamps were still out and a building crew was repairing a partly collapsed roof. Orly Gordon called out to her from high on a ladder, and Lina looked up and waved. Farther on, she passed a woman with bits of rope and string for sale and a man pulling a cart full of carrots and beets to the grocery stores. At the corner, a cluster of little children played catch with a rag ball. The streets were alive with people today. Moving fast, Lina threaded her way among them.

But as she went into Otterwill Street, she saw something that made her slow down. A man was standing on the steps of the Gathering Hall, shouting and howling, and a crowd of people had gathered around him. Lina went closer, and when she saw who it was, her insides gave a lurch. It was Sadge Merrall. His arms flailed wildly, and his eyes were stretched wide open. In a high, rapid voice, he wailed out a stream of words: "I have been to the Unknown Regions!" he cried. "There is nothing, nothing, nothing there! Did you think something out there might save us? Ha! There's only darkness and monsters, darkness and terrible deep holes, darkness forever! The rats are the size of houses! The rocks are sharp as knives! The darkness sucks your breath out! No hope for us out there, oh no! No hope, no hope!" He went on like this for a few minutes and then crumpled to the ground. The people watching him looked at each other and shook their heads.

"Gone mad," Lina heard someone say.

"Yes, completely," said someone else.

Suddenly Sadge sprang up again and resumed his terrible shouting. The crowd stepped back. Some of them hurried away. A few of them approached Sadge, speaking in calming voices. They took him by the arms and led him, still shouting, down the steps.

"Who dat? Who dat?" said Poppy in her small, piercing voice. Lina turned away from the miserable spectacle. "Hush, Poppy," she said. "It's a poor, sad man. He doesn't feel good. We mustn't stare."

She headed toward Night Street, which ran along Greengate Square. There a stringy-haired man sat cross-legged on the ground playing a flute made out of a drainpipe, and five or six Believers circled him, clapping and singing. "Soon, soon, coming soon," they sang. What's coming soon? Lina wondered, but she didn't stop to ask.

Two blocks beyond, she came to a store that had no sign in its window. This must be the one, she thought.

At first it looked closed. Its window was dark. But the door opened when she pushed on it, and a bell attached to its doorknob clanked. From the back room came a black-haired man with big teeth and a long neck. "Yes?" he said.

Lina recognized him. He was the one who'd given her the message for the mayor on her very first day of work. His name was Hooper—no, Looper, that was it.

“Do you have pencils for sale?” she asked. It seemed doubtful. The shop’s shelves were empty except for a few stacks of used paper.

Poppy squirmed on Lina’s back and whimpered a little.

“Sometimes,” said Looper.

Poppy’s whimper became a wail.

“All right, you can get down,” Lina said to her. She set her on the floor, where she tottered about unsteadily.

“What I’d like to see,” said Lina, “are your coloured pencils. If you have any.”

“We have a few,” said Looper. “They are somewhat expensive.” He smiled, showing his pushy teeth.

“Could I see them?” said Lina.

He went into the back room and returned a moment later, carrying a small box, which he set down on the counter. He took the lid off. Lina bent forward to look.

Inside the box were at least a dozen coloured pencils—red, green, blue, yellow, purple, orange. They had never even been sharpened; their ends were flat. They had erasers. Lina’s heart gave a few fast beats.

“How much are they?” she said.

“Probably too much for you,” the man said.

“Probably *not*,” said Lina. “I have a job.”

“Good, good,” the man said, smiling again. “No need to take offense.” He picked up the yellow pencil and twirled it between his fingers. “Each pencil,” he said, “five dollars.”

Five dollars! For seven, you could buy a coat—it would be an old, patched coat, but still warm. “That’s too much,” Lina said.

He shrugged and began to put the lid back on the box.

“But maybe . . .” Lina’s thoughts raced. “Let me look at them again.”

Once more the man lifted the lid and Lina bent over the pencils. She picked one up. It was painted a deep clear blue, and on its flat top was the blue dot of the lead. The pink

eraser was held on by a shiny metal collar. So beautiful! I could buy just one, Lina thought. Then I could save a little more and buy a coat for Granny *next* month.

“Make up your mind,” said the man. “I have other customers who are interested, if you aren’t.”

“All right. I’ll take one. No, wait.” It was like hunger, what she felt. It was the same as when her hand sometimes seemed to reach out by itself to grab a piece of food. It was too strong to resist. “I’ll take two,” she said, and a faint, dazzly feeling came over her at the thought of what she was doing.

“Which two?” the man said.

There were more colours in that box of pencils than in all of Ember. Ember’s colours were all so much the same—grey buildings, grey streets, black sky; even the colours of people’s clothes were faded from long use into mud green, and rust red, and gray-blue. But these colors—they were as bright as the leaves and flowers in the greenhouse.

Lina’s hand hovered over the pencils. “The blue one,” she said. “And . . . the yellow one—no, the . . . the . . .”

The man made an impatient noise in the back of his throat.

“The green one,” said Lina. “I’ll take the blue and the green.” She lifted them out of the box. She took the money from the pocket of her coat and handed it to the man, and she put the pencils in her pocket. They were hers now; she felt a fierce, defiant joy. She turned to go, and that was when she saw that the baby was no longer in the store.

“Poppy!” she cried. She whirled around. “Did you see my little sister go out?” she asked the man. “Did you see which way she went?”

He shrugged. “Didn’t notice,” he said.

Lina darted into the street and looked in both directions. She saw lots of people, some children, but no Poppy. She stopped an old woman. “Have you seen a little girl, a baby, walking by herself? In a green jacket, with a hood?” The old woman just stared at her with dull eyes and shook her head.

“Poppy!” Lina called. “Poppy!” Her voice rose to a shout. Such a little baby couldn’t have gone far, she thought. Maybe down toward Greengate Square, where there ere more people walking around. She began to run.

And then the lights flickered, and flickered again, and went out. Darkness slammed up in front of her like a wall. She stumbled, caught herself, and stood still. She could see absolutely nothing.

Shouts of alarm came from up and down the street, and then silence. Lina stretched her arms out. Was she facing the street or a building? Terror swept through her. I must just stand still, she thought. The lights will come on again in a few seconds, they always do. But she thought of Poppy alone in the blackness, and her legs went weak. *I must find her.*

She took a step. When she didn't bump into anything, she took another step, and the fingers of her right hand crumpled against something hard. The wall of a building, she thought. Keeping her hand against it, she turned left a little and took another step forward. Then suddenly her hand touched empty air. This would be Dedlock Street. Or had she passed Dedlock Street already? She couldn't keep the picture of the streets clear in her mind. The darkness seemed to fill not just the city around her but the inside of her head as well.

Heart pounding, she waited. Come back, lights, she pleaded. Please come back. She wanted to call out to Poppy, to tell her to stand still, not to be afraid, she would come for her soon. But the darkness pressed against her and she couldn't summon her voice. She could hardly breathe. She wanted to claw the darkness away from her eyes, as if it were someone's hands.

Small sounds came from here and there around her—a whimpering, a shuffling. In the distance someone called out incoherently. How many minutes had gone by? The longest blackout ever had been three minutes and fourteen seconds. Surely this was longer.

She could have endured it if she'd been on her own. It was the thought of Poppy, lost, that she couldn't stand—and lost because she had been paying more attention to a box of pencils. Oh, she'd been selfish and greedy, and now she was so, so sorry! She made herself take another step forward. But then she thought, What if I'm going *away* from Poppy? She began to tremble, and she felt the sinking and dissolving inside her that meant she was going to cry. Her legs gave way like wet paper and she slid down until she was sitting on the street, with her head on her knees. Trembling, her mind a wordless whirl of dread, she waited.

An endless time went by. A moan came from somewhere to the left. A door slammed closed. Footsteps started, then stopped. Into Lina's mind floated the beginning of the worst question: What if the lights never . . . ? She squeezed her arms around her knees and made the question stop. Lights come back, she said to herself, Lights come back, come back.

And suddenly they did.

Lina sprang up. There was the street again, and people looking upward with their mouths hanging open. All around, people started crying or wailing or grinning in relief. Then all at once everyone started to hurry, moving fast toward the safety of home in case it should happen again.

Lina ran toward Greengate Square, stopping everyone she passed. “Did you see a little girl walking by herself just before the lights went out?” she asked. “Green jacket with a hood?” But no one wanted to listen to her.

On the Bee Street side of the square stood a few people all talking at once and waving their arms. Lina ran up to them and asked her question.

They stopped talking and stared at her. “How could we have seen anyone? The lights were out,” said Nammy Proogs, a tiny old woman whose back was so bent that she had to twist her head sideways to look up.

Lina said, “No, she wandered away *before* the lights went out. She got away from me. She may have come this direction.”

“You have to keep your eye on a baby,” Nammy Proogs scolded.

“Babies need watching,” said one of the women who’d been singing with the Believers.

But someone else said, “Oh, a toddler? Green jacket?” and he walked over to an open shop door and called, “You have that baby in there?” and through the door came someone leading Poppy by the hand.

Lina dashed to her and lifted her up. Poppy broke into loud wails. “You’re all right now,” said Lina, holding her tightly. “Don’t worry, sweetie. You were just lost a moment, now you’re all right. I’ve got you, don’t worry.” When she looked up to thank the person who’d found her, she saw a face she recognized. It was Doon. He looked the same as when she’d last seen him, except that his hair was shaggier. He had on the same baggy brown jacket he always wore.

“She was marching up the street by herself,” he said. “No one knew who she belonged to, so I took her into my father’s shop.”

“She belongs to me,” Lina said. “She’s my sister. I was so afraid when he was lost. I thought she might fall and hurt herself, or be knocked over, or . . . Anyway, thank you *so much* for rescuing her.”

“Anyone would have,” said Doon. He frowned and looked down at the pavement.

Poppy had calmed down and was curled up against Lina’s chest with her thumb in her mouth. “And your job—how is it?” Lina asked. “The pipeworks?”

Doon shrugged his shoulders. “All right,” he said. “Interesting, anyway.”

She waited, but it seemed that was all he was going to say. “Well, thank you again,” she said. She hoisted Poppy around to her back.

“Lucky for you Doon Harrow was around,” said Nammy Progs, who’d been watching them with her sideways glare. “He’s a good-hearted boy. Anything breaks at my house, he fixes it.” She hobbled after Lina, shaking a finger at her. “You’d better watch that baby more carefully,” she called.

“You shouldn’t leave her alone,” the flute player added.

“I know,” said Lina. “You’re right.”

When she got home, she put the tired baby to bed in the bedroom they shared. Granny had been taking an afternoon nap in the front room and hadn’t noticed the blackout at all. Lina told her that the lights had gone out for a few minutes, but she didn’t mention anything about Poppy getting lost.

Later, in her bedroom, with Poppy asleep, she took the two coloured pencils from her pocket. They were not quite as beautiful as they had been. When she held them, she remembered the powerful wanting she had felt in that dusty store, and the feeling of it was mixed up with fear and shame and darkness.