

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Read Chapter 7 of the City of Ember. Whilst reading you will come across some underlined words which you must copy then practice spelling them.**

## **CHAPTER 7**

### *A Message Full of Holes*

It was the printing that sparked Lina's curiosity. It was not handwriting, or if it was, it was the neatest, most regular handwriting she had ever seen. It was more like the letters printed on cans of food or along the sides of pencils. Something other than a hand had written those words. A machine of some kind. This was the writing of the Builders. And so this piece of paper must have come from the Builders, too.

Lina gathered up the scraps of paper from the floor and gently pried open Poppy's fists and mouth to extract the crumpled wads. She put all this into the dented box and carried it to her room.

That evening, Granny and the baby were both asleep by a little after eight. Lina had nearly an hour to examine her discovery. She took the scraps from the box and spread them out on the table in her bedroom. The paper was thick; at each torn edge was a fringe of tangled fibres. There were many little pieces and one big piece with so many holes that it was like lace. The chewed bits were beyond saving—they were almost a paste. But Lina spread out the big lacy piece and saw that on one edge of it, which was still intact, was a column of numbers. She collected all the dry scraps and puzzled over them for a long time, trying to figure out where they fit into the larger piece. When she had arranged them as well as she could, this was what she had:

Instru                      r Egres

This offic    doc                      in stric  
 secur            period of            ears.  
 prepara                      made for  
 inha                      city.  
 as foll

1. Exp  
 riv                      ip ork .

2.            ston marked with E by r  
 dge

3.            adde down iverb nk  
 to edge appr            eight  
 low.

4.                                      acks to the  
 wat r,            find door of bo  
 ker. Ke                      hind small steel  
 pan    the right                      . Rem  
 ey, open do .

5.            oat,            stocked with  
 nec            uip ent. Bac  
 ont s            eet.

6. Usi                      opes, lowe  
 ter. Head dow st            . Us pa  
 av            cks and assist over rap .

7.            approx. 3 hours. Disem  
 . Follow            pat .

Lina could make sense of only a few words here and there. Even so, something about this tattered document was exciting. It was not like anything Lina had ever seen. She stared at the very first word at the top of the page, “Instru,” and she suddenly knew what it must be. She’d seen it often enough at school. It had to be the beginning of “Instructions.”

Her heart began knocking at her chest like a fist at a door. She had found something. She had found something strange and important: instructions for something. But for what? And how terrible that Poppy had found it first and ruined it!

It occurred to Lina that this might be what her grandmother had been talking about for so long. Perhaps *this* was the thing that was lost. But of course not knowing what had been lost, Granny wouldn’t have recognized the box when she saw it. She would have tossed it out of the closet just as carelessly as she tossed everything else. Anyhow, it

didn’t matter whether this was the thing or not the thing. It was a mystery in itself, whatever it was, and Lina was determined to solve it.

The first step was to stick the scraps of paper down. They were so light that a breath could scatter them. She had a little bit of glue left in an old bottle. Painstakingly, she put a dot of glue on each of the scraps and pressed each one into its place on one of her precious few remaining whole sheets of paper. She put another piece of paper on top of this and set the box on top to flatten everything down. Just as she finished, the lights went out—she’d forgotten to keep an eye on the clock on her windowsill. She had to undress and get in bed in the dark.

She was too excited to sleep much that night. Her mind whirled around, trying to think what the message she’d found might be. She felt sure it had something to do with saving the city. What if these instructions were for fixing the electricity? Or for making a movable light? That would change everything.

When the lights went on in the morning, she had a few minutes before Poppy wakened to work at the puzzle. But there were so many words missing! How could she ever make sense of such a jumble? As she pulled on her red jacket and tied the frayed and knotted laces of her shoes, she thought about it. If the paper was important, she

shouldn't keep it to herself. But who could she tell? Maybe the messenger captain. She would know about things like official documents.

"Captain Fleery," Lina said when she got to work, "would you have time to come home with me later on today? Just for a minute? I found something I'd like to show you."

"Found what?" asked Captain Fleery.

"Some paper with writing on it. I think it might be important."

Captain Fleery raised her skinny eyebrows. "What do you mean, important?"

"Well, I'm not sure. Maybe it isn't. But would you look at it anyway?"

So that evening Captain Fleery came home with Lina and peered at the bits of paper. She bent down and inspected the writing. "Foll?" she said. "Acks? Rem? Ont? What kind of words are those?"

"I don't know," said Lina. "The words are all broken up because Poppy chewed on them."

"I see," said Captain Fleery. She poked at the paper. "This looks like instructions for something," she said. "A recipe, I suppose. 'Small steel pan'—that would be what you use to cook it with."

"But who would have such small, perfect writing?"

"That's the way they wrote in the old days," said Captain Fleery. "It could be a very *old* recipe."

"But then why would it have been kept in this beautiful box?" She showed the box to Captain Fleery. "I think it was locked up in here for some reason, and you wouldn't lock up something unless it was important. . . ."

But Captain Fleery didn't seem to have heard her. "Or," she said, "it could be a school exercise. Someone's homework that never got turned in."

"But have you ever seen paper like this? Doesn't it look as if it came from someplace else—not here?"

Captain Fleery straightened up. A look of puzzlement came over her face. "There *is* nowhere but here," she said. She put both her hands on Lina's shoulders. "You, my dear, are letting your imagination run away with you. Are you overtired, Lina? Are you anxious? I could put you on short days for a while."

“No,” said Lina, “I’m fine. I am. But I don’t know what to do about . . .” She gestured toward the paper.

“Never mind,” said Captain Fleery. “Don’t think about it. Throw it away. You’re worrying too much—I know, I know, we all are, there’s so much to worry about, but we mustn’t let it unsettle us.” She gave Lina a long look. Her eyes were the colour of dishwater. “Help is coming,” she said.

“Help?”

“Yes. Coming to save us.”

“Who is?”

Captain Fleery bent down and lowered her voice, as if telling a secret. “Who built our city, dear?”

“The Builders,” said Lina.

“That’s right. And the Builders will come again and show us the way.”

“They will?”

“Very soon,” said Captain Fleery.

“How do you know?”

Captain Fleery straightened up again and clapped a hand over her heart. “I know it here,” she said. “And I have seen it in a dream. So have all of us, all the Believers.”

So that’s what they believe, Lina thought—and Captain Fleery is one of them. She wondered how the captain could feel so sure about it, just because she’d seen it in a dream. Maybe it was the same for her as the sparkling city was for Lina—she *wanted* it to be true.

The captain’s face lit up. “I know what you must do, dear—come to one of our meetings. It would lift your heart. We sing.”

“Oh,” said Lina, “thank you, but I’m not sure I . . . maybe sometime . . .” She tried to be polite, but she knew she wouldn’t go. She didn’t want to stand around waiting for the Builders. She had other things to do.

Captain Fleery patted her arm. “No pressure, dear,” she said. “If you change your mind, let me know. But take my advice: forget about your little puzzle project. Lie down and take a nap. Clears the mind.” Her narrow face beamed kindness down at Lina. “You take tomorrow off,” she said. She raised a hand goodbye and went down the stairs.

Lina took advantage of her day off to go to the Supply Depot to see Lizzie Bisco. Lizzie was quick and smart. She might have some good ideas.

At the Supply Depot, crowds of shopkeepers stood in long disorderly lines that stretched out the door. They pushed and jostled and snapped impatiently at each other. Lina joined them, but they seemed so frantic that they frightened her a little. They must be very sure now that the supplies are running out, she thought, and they're determined to get what they can before it's too late.

When she got close to the head of the line, she heard the same conversation several times. "Sorry," the clerk would say when a shopkeeper asked for ten packets of sewing needles, or a dozen drinking glasses, or twenty packages of light bulbs. "There's a severe shortage of that item. You can have only one." Or else the clerk would say, "Sorry. We're out of that entirely." "Forever?" "Forever."

Lina knew that it hadn't always been this way. When Ember was a young city, the storerooms were full. They held everything the citizens could want—so much it seemed the supplies would never run out. Lina's grandmother had told her that schoolchildren were given a tour of the storerooms as part of their education. They took an elevator from the street level to a long, curving tunnel with doors on both sides and other tunnels branching off it. The guide led the tour down the long passages, opening one door after another. "This area," he would say, "is Canned Goods. Next we come to School Supplies. And around this bend we have Kitchenware. Next come Carpentry Tools." At each door, the children crowded against each other to see.

"Every room had something different," Granny told Lina. "Boxes of toothpaste in one room. Bottles of cooking oil. Bars of soap. Boxes of pills—there were twenty rooms just for vitamin pills. One room was stacked with hundreds of cans of fruit. There was something called pineapple, I remember that one especially."

"What was pineapple?" asked Lina.

"It was yellow and sweet," said Granny with a dreamy look in her eyes. "I had it four times before we ran out of it."

But these tours had been discontinued long before Lina was born. The storerooms, people said, were no longer a pleasure to look at. Their dusty shelves stood mostly empty now. It was rumoured that in some rooms nothing was left at all. A child seeing the rooms where powdered milk had been stored, or the rooms that stored bandages or socks or pins or notebooks, or—most of all—the dozens of rooms that had once held thousands of light bulbs—would not feel, as earlier generations of children had, that Ember was endlessly rich. Today's children, if they were to tour the storerooms, would feel afraid.

Thinking about all this, Lina waited in the line of people at Lizzie's station. When she got to the front, she leaned forward with her elbows on the counter and whispered, "Lizzie, can you meet me after you're through with work? I'll wait for you right outside the door." Lizzie nodded eagerly.

At four o'clock, Lizzie came trotting out the office door. Lina said to her, "Will you come home with me for a minute? I want to show you something."

"Sure," said Lizzie, and as they walked, Lizzie talked. "My wrist is killing me from writing all day," she said. "You have to write in the tiniest letters to save paper, so I get a terrible *cramp* in my wrist and my fingers. And people are so *rude*. Today they were worse than ever. I said to some guy, 'You can't have fifteen cans of corn, you can only have three,' and he said, 'Look, don't tell me that, I saw plenty of cans in the Pott Street market just yesterday,' and I said, 'Well, that's why there aren't so many left today,' and he said, 'Don't be smart with me, carrothead.' But what am I supposed to do? I can't *make* cans of corn out of thin air."

They passed through Harken Square, around the Gathering Hall, and down Roving Street, where three of the floodlights were out, making a cave of shadow.

"Lizzie," said Lina, interrupting the flow of talk. "Is it true about light bulbs?"

"Is what true?"

"That there aren't very many left?"

Lizzie shrugged. "I don't know. They hardly ever let us go downstairs into the storerooms. All we see are the reports the carriers turn in—how many forks in Room 1146, how many doorknobs in 3291, how many children's shoes in 2249 . . ."

"But when you see the report for the light bulb rooms, what does it say?"

"I never get to see that one," said Lizzie. "That one, and a few other ones like the vitamin report, only a few people can see."

"Who?"

"Oh, the mayor, and of course old Flab Face." Lina looked at her questioningly. "You know, Farlo Batten, the head of the storerooms. He is so *mean*, Lina, you would just hate him. He counts us late if we come in even two minutes after eight, and he looks over our shoulders as we're writing, which is awful because he has bad breath, and he runs his finger over what we've written and says, 'This word is illegible, that word is illegible, these numbers are illegible.' It's his favourite word, illegible."

When they came to Lina's street, Lina ducked her head in the door of the yarn shop and said hello to Granny, and then they climbed the stairs to the apartment. Lizzie was

talking about how hard it was to stand up all day, how it made her knees ache, how her shoes pinched her feet. She stopped talking long enough to say hello to Evaleen Murdo, who was sitting by the window with Poppy on her lap, and then she began again as Lina led her into her bedroom.

“Lina, where were you when the big blackout came?” she asked, but she went right on without waiting for an answer. “I was at home, *luckily*. But it was scary, wasn’t it?”

Lina nodded. She didn’t want to talk about what had happened that day.

“I hate those blackouts,” Lizzie went on. “People say there’s going to be more and more of them, and that someday—” She stopped, frowned, and started again. “Anyway, nothing bad happened to me. After that, I got up and figured out a whole new way to do my hair.”

It seemed to Lina that Lizzie was like a clock wound too tightly and running too fast. She’d always been a little this way, but today she was more so than ever. Her gaze skipped from one spot to another, her fingers twiddled with the edge of her shirt. She looked paler than usual, too. Her freckles stood out like little smudges of dirt on her nose.

“Lizzie,” said Lina, beckoning toward the table in the corner of her room. “I want to show you—”

But Lizzie wasn’t listening. “You’re so lucky to be a messenger, Lina,” she said. “Is it fun? I wish I could have been one. I would have been so good at it. My job is so boring.”

Lina turned and looked at her. “Isn’t there *anything* you like about it?”

Lizzie pursed her lips in a tiny smile and looked sideways at Lina. “There’s one thing,” she said.

“What?”

“I can’t tell you. It’s a secret.”

“Oh,” said Lina. Then you shouldn’t have mentioned it at all, she thought.

“Maybe I’ll tell you someday,” said Lizzie. “I don’t know.”

“Well, I like *my* job,” Lina said. “But what I wanted to talk to you about was what I found yesterday. It’s this.”

She lifted the box away and took up the piece of paper covering the patched together document. Lizzie gave it a quick look. “Is it a message someone gave you? That got torn up?”

“No, it was in our closet. Poppy was chewing on it, that’s why it’s torn up. But look at the writing on it. Isn’t it strange?”

“Uh-huh,” said Lizzie. “You know who has beautiful handwriting? Myla Bone, who works with me. You should see it, it’s got curly tails on the y’s and the g’s, and fancy loops on the capital letters. Of course Flab Face hates it, he says it’s illegible. . . .”

Lina slid the piece of paper back over the pasted-down scraps. She wondered why she had thought Lizzie would be interested in what she’d found. She’d always had fun with Lizzie. But their fun was usually with games—hide-and-seek, tag, the kinds of games where you run and climb. Lizzie never had been much interested in anything that was written on paper.

So Lina quietly put the document back in its place, and she sat down with Lizzie on the floor. She listened and listened until Lizzie’s chatter ran down. “I’d better go,” Lizzie said. “It was fun to see you, Lina. I miss you.” She stood up. She fluffed her hair. “What was it you wanted to show me? Oh, yes—the fancy writing. Really nice. Lucky you to find it. Come and see me again soon, all right? I get so bored in that office.”

Lina made beet soup for dinner that night, and Poppy spilled hers and made a red lake on the table. Granny stared into her bowl, stirring and stirring the soup with her spoon, but she didn’t eat. She didn’t feel quite right, she told Lina; after a while she wandered off to bed. Lina cleaned up the kitchen quickly. As soon as her chores were out of the way, she could get back to studying her document. She washed Poppy’s clothes. She sewed on the buttons that had come off her messenger jacket. She picked up the rags and sacks and boxes and bags that Granny had tossed out of the closet. And by the time she had done all this and put Poppy to bed, she still had almost half an hour to study the fragments of paper.

She sat down at her desk and uncovered the document. With her elbows on either side of it and her chin resting in her hands, she pored over it. Though Lizzie and Captain Fleery had paid it no attention, Lina still thought this torn-up page must be important. Why else would it have been in such a cleverly fastened box? Maybe she should show it to the mayor, she thought reluctantly. She didn’t like the mayor. She didn’t trust him, either. But if this document was important to the future of the city, he was the one who should know about it. Of course, she couldn’t ask the mayor to come to her house. She pictured him puffing up the stairs, squeezing through the door, looking disapprovingly at the clutter in their house, recoiling from Poppy’s sticky hands—no, it wouldn’t do.

But she didn’t want to take her carefully patched-together document to the Gathering Hall, either. It was just too fragile. The best thing to do, she decided, was to write the mayor a note. She settled down to do this.

She found a fairly unspoiled half-piece of paper, and, using a plain pencil (she wasn’t going to waste her coloured ones on the mayor), she wrote:

*Dear Mayor Cole,*

*I have discovered a document that was in the closet. It is Instructions for something. I believe it is important because it is written in very old printing. Unfortunately it got chewed up by my sister, so it is not all there. But you can still read some bits of it, such as:*

*marked with E  
find door of bo  
small steel pan*

*I will show you this document if you want to see it.*

She folded the note in half and wrote “Mayor Cole” on the front. On her way to work the next morning, she took it to the Gathering Hall. No one was sitting at the guard’s desk, so Lina left the note there, placed so that the guard would see it when he arrived. Then, feeling that she had done her duty, she went off to her station.

Several days went by. The messages Lina carried were full of worry and fear. “Do you have any extra Baby Drink? I can’t find it at the store.” “Have you heard what they’re saying about the generator?” “We can’t come tonight—Grandpa B. won’t get out of bed.”

Every day when she got home from work, Lina asked Granny, “Did a message come for me?” But there was nothing. Maybe the mayor hadn’t gotten her note. Maybe he’d gotten it and paid no attention. After a week, Lina decided she was tired of waiting. If the mayor wasn’t interested in what she’d found, too bad for him. *She* was interested. She would figure it out herself.

Twice during the week, when Poppy and Granny were both asleep, she’d had a little free time. She’d spent this time making a copy of the document, in case anything happened to the fragile original. It had taken her a long time. She used one of her few remaining pieces of paper—an old label, slightly torn, from a can of peas. The copy was as accurate as she could make it, with the missing bits between the letters carefully indicated as dashes. She had tucked it under the mattress of her bed for safekeeping.

Now she finally had a whole free evening. Poppy and Granny were both asleep, and the apartment was tidy. Lina sat down at her table and uncovered the patched-together document. She tied back her hair so it wouldn’t keep falling in her face, and she put a piece of paper next to her—blank except for a little bit of Poppy’s scribbling—to write down what she decoded.

She started with the title. The first word she’d already figured out. It had to be “Instructions.” The next word could be “for.” Then came “Egres”—she wasn’t sure about that. Maybe it was someone’s name. Egresman. Egreston. “Instructions for Egreston.” She decided to call it “The Instructions” for short.

She went on to the first line. “This offic doc” probably meant “This official document.” Maybe “secur” meant “secure.” Or “security.” Then there were the words “period” and “ears” and “city.” But after that, so much was missing.

She studied the line next to the number 1. *Exp*. That could be *Expect* or *Expert* or so many things. She moved on to *riv*. That might be part of a word like “drive” or “strive.” What could *ip* and *ork* possibly be? They were so close together, maybe they were part of one word. What ended with *-ip*? *Whip*, Lina thought. *Trip*. *Slip*. What ended with *-ork*? *Fork* came to mind immediately. *Tripfork*. *Slipfork*. Nothing she could think of made sense.

Maybe it wasn't *fork*. What else ended in *-ork*? Starting at the beginning of the alphabet, Lina went through all the words that rhymed with *fork*. Most of them were nonsense: *bork*, *dork*, *gork*, *hork*, *jork*. . . This isn't going to work, she thought miserably. Oh . . . *work*! The word could be *work*.

Then what would the first part be? *Tripwork*? *Flipwork*? But maybe there was a letter between the p and the w. *Dipswork*? *Pipswork*?

Suddenly it came to her. Pipeworks. Pipeworks! That had to be it. Something in this message was about the Pipeworks!

Lina looked back at *Exp* and *riv*. *Riv*! That could be *river*! Rapidly she ran her eyes down the page. In line 3, she saw *iverb nk*—that looked like *riverbank*. The word *door* jumped out at her from line 4, whole on its scrap of paper. Lina took a quick breath. A door! What if it was the one she'd wished for, the one that led to the other city? Maybe her city was real after all, and these were instructions for finding it!

She wanted to leap from her chair and shout. The message had something to do with the river, a door, and the Pipeworks. And who did she know who knew about the Pipeworks? Doon, of course.

She pictured his thin, serious face, and his eyes looking out searchingly from beneath his dark eyebrows. She pictured how he used to bend over his work at school, holding his pencil in a hard grip, and how, during free time, he was usually off by himself in a corner studying a moth or a worm or a taken-apart clock. That was one thing, at least, that she liked about Doon: he was curious. He paid attention to things.

And he cared about things, too. She remembered how he'd been on Assignment Day, so furious at the mayor, so eager to trade his good job for her bad one so he could help save the city. And he'd taken Poppy inside his father's shop on the day of the blackout, so she wouldn't be afraid.

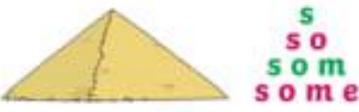
Why had she stopped being friends with Doon? She vaguely recalled the incident of the light pole. It seemed silly now, and long ago. The more she thought about Doon, the more it seemed he was the very person—the *only* person—who might be interested in what she had found.

She placed the plain sheet of paper over the Instructions and put the box on top. I'll go and find Doon, she thought. Tomorrow was Thursday—their day off. She would find him tomorrow and ask for his help.

These are the words you should have listed. Use the strategies below to practice the spellings in your book. Hopefully an older sibling or adult can test you on these later in the day or week.

Vaguely      nonsense      document      interested      whispered,

Discontinued      unsettle      precious      discovery

<p>Spelling Challenge</p> <h3>UPPER and Lower</h3> <p>Write each of your words out <b>two</b> times. Write in <b>UPPERCASE</b> the first time and in <b>lowercase</b> the second time.</p> <p><b>LITERACY literacy</b></p>	<p>Spelling Challenge</p> <h3>Joined-Up Writing</h3> <p>First, write out your words in <b>normal writing</b>. Next, write them again in <b>joined-up writing</b>.</p> <p><b>literacy literacy</b></p>	<p>Spelling Challenge</p> <h3>Rainbow Words</h3> <p>Write your words out in pencil. Next, draw around each letter <b>five more times</b> using a different coloured pencil.</p> <p><b>literacy</b></p>
<p>Spelling Challenge</p> <h3>Pyramid Writing</h3> <p>Write each of your words like a pyramid:</p>  <p><b>s so som some</b></p>	<p>Spelling Challenge</p> <h3>Fancy Letters</h3> <p>Write each of your words using <b>fancy writing</b>. Your letters could be curly or dotty... or whatever you decide!</p> 	<p>Spelling Challenge</p> <h3>Join the Dots</h3> <p>Write each of your words using <b>dots</b>. Then, <b>join the dots</b> with a coloured pencil to make your word.</p>  <p>ink saving Eco</p>