

Thursday 14th May 2020

Write complete sentences to answer these questions. But first you must read chapter 11.

Chapters 10-11

1. How does Doon react when he sees Lina's document?
2. Why does Lina decide to go to the Pipeworks?
3. Why are Lina and Doon disappointed during their after-hours visit to the Pipeworks?
4. Why does Granny call Lina into her room in the middle of the night?
5. In what ways does Mrs. Murdo show she is "somewhere between a friend and a relative" to Lina?
6. How has life in Ember changed since the seven-minute power outage?
7. Why does Lizzie try to avoid Lina when they see one another on the street?
8. Why does Lina refuse to accept Lizzie's offer of more food in the future?

CHAPTER 11

Lizzie's Groceries

Lina spent all that day in Mrs. Murdo's house, which was just like theirs only neater. There was one couch, and one fat chair covered in fuzzy striped material, and one big table, only Mrs. Murdo's table wasn't wobbly like theirs. On the table was a basket, and in the basket were three turnips, each of them lavender on one end and white on the other. Mrs. Murdo must have put them there, Lina thought, not just because she was going to have them for dinner, but also because they were beautiful.

Lina sat sideways on the couch with her legs stretched out, and Mrs. Murdo covered her with a soft gray-green blanket. "This will keep you warm," she said, tucking it around Lina's legs. Lina didn't really feel cold but she did feel sad, which was in a way the same. The blanket felt good, like someone holding her. Mrs. Murdo gave Poppy a long purple scarf to play with and made a creamy mushroom soup with potatoes, and all day Lina stayed there, snuggled under the blanket. She thought about her grandmother, who had had a long and mostly cheerful life. She cried some and fell asleep. She woke up and played with Poppy. The day had a strange but comforting feel to it, like a rest between the end of one time and the beginning of another.

On the morning of the next day, Lina got up and got ready to go to work. Mrs. Murdo gave her beet tea and spinach hash for breakfast. "The Singing's coming up soon," she remarked to Lina as they ate. "Do you know your part?"

"Yes," said Lina. "I remember it pretty well from last year."

"I rather like the Singing," said Mrs. Murdo.

"I love it," Lina said. "I think it's my favorite day of the year." Once a year, the people of the city came together to sing the three great songs of Ember. Just thinking of it made Lina feel better. She finished her breakfast and put on her red jacket.

"Don't worry about Poppy, I'll take care of her," said Mrs. Murdo as Lina headed for the door. "When you come back this evening, we'll talk about how to proceed."

"Proceed?" said Lina.

"Well, you can't live by yourselves, just the two of you, can you?"

"We can't?"

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Murdo sternly. "Who's to take care of Poppy while you go off delivering messages? You must move in here with me. I have an empty bedroom, after all, and quite a nice one. Come and look."

She opened a door at the far end of the living room, and Lina peeked in. She had never seen such a beautiful cozy room. There was a big lumpy bed covered with a faded blue blanket, and at its head four plump pillows. Next to the bed was a chest of drawers with drawer handles shaped like teardrops and a mirror attached to the top. The carpets on the floor were all different shades of blue and green, and in the corner was a sturdy square table and a chair with a back like a ladder. "This will be your room," said Mrs. Murdo. "Yours and Poppy's. You'll have to share the bed, but it's big enough."

"It's lovely," Lina said. "You're so kind, Mrs. Murdo."

"Well," said Mrs. Murdo briskly, "it's just common sense. You need a place. I have one. You go on now, and I'll see you this evening."

Three days had passed since Lina and Doon had seen the man in the Pipeworks, and there hadn't been any special announcements. So if that man had discovered a way out of Ember, he was keeping the news to himself. Lina couldn't understand why.

As Lina ran through the city with her messages on her first day back to work, it seemed to her that the mood of the people was even gloomier than before. There were long, silent lines at the markets, and knots of people gathered in the squares, talking in low voices. Many shops—more each day, it seemed—displayed signs in their windows saying "Closed" or "Open Mon. Tues. Only." Every now and then, the lights flickered, and people stopped and looked up in fright. When the flickering ended, and the lights stayed lit, people just took a breath and walked on.

Lina delivered her messages as usual, but inside she felt strange. Everywhere she ran, she heard the same words, like a drumbeat, in her mind: *alone in the world, alone in the*

world. It wasn't exactly true. She had Poppy. She had friends. And she had Mrs. Murdo, who was somewhere between a friend and a relative. But she felt as if she had suddenly gotten older in the last three days. She was a sort of mother herself now. What happened to Poppy was more or less up to her.

As the day went on, she stopped thinking *alone in the world* and began thinking about her new life at Mrs. Murdo's. She thought about the blue-green room and planned how she would arrange her pictures on the walls. The one she'd drawn with her blue pencil would look especially nice, because it would match the colour of the rugs. She could bring her pillows from home and add them to the ones on the bed, and then she'd have six altogether—and maybe she could find some old blue dresses or shirts and make pillow covers for them. The blue-green room, the orderly apartment, the meals cooked, and the blankets tucked in cosily at night—all this gave her a feeling of comfort, almost luxury. She was grateful for Mrs. Murdo's kindness. I am not ready yet to be alone in the world, she thought.

Late that afternoon, Lina was given a message to take to Lampling Street. She delivered the message and, as she was coming back out onto the street, caught sight of Lizzie coming out the door of the Supply Depot—her orange hair was unmistakable. "Lizzie!" Lina called out.

Lizzie must not have heard her. She kept on going. Lina called again. "Lizzie, wait!" This time it was clear that Lizzie had heard, but instead of stopping, she walked faster. What's the matter with her? Lina wondered. She ran after her and grabbed the back of her coat. "Lizzie, it's me!"

Lizzie stopped and turned around. "Oh!" she said. Her face was flushed. "It's you. Hi! I thought it was . . . I didn't realize it was you." She smiled brightly, but there was a distracted look in her eyes. "I was just going home," she said. Her arms were wrapped around a small bulging sack.

"I'll walk with you," said Lina.

"Oh," said Lizzie. "Oh, good." But she didn't look pleased.

"Lizzie, something sad has happened," Lina said. "My grandmother died."

Lizzie gave her a quick sideways glance, but she didn't stop walking. "That's too bad," she said absently. "Poor you."

What was wrong with her? Lizzie was ordinarily so interested in other people's misfortunes. She could be sincerely sympathetic, too, when she wasn't wrapped up in her own troubles.

Lina changed the subject. "What's in the sack?" she asked.

“Oh, just some groceries,” said Lizzie. “I stopped at the market after work.”

“You did?” Lina was confused. She had seen Lizzie not two minutes ago leaving the storeroom office.

Lizzie didn’t answer. She began walking and talking quite fast. “It was so busy today at work. Work is so hard, isn’t it, Lina? I think work is much harder than school, and not as interesting. You do the same thing every day. I get so *tired*, don’t you, running around all day?”

Lina started to say that she liked running and hardly ever got tired, but Lizzie didn’t wait for her to answer.

“Oh, well, at least there are some good things about it. Guess what, Lina? I have a boyfriend. I met him at work. He really likes me—he says my hair is the exact colour of a red-hot burner on a stove.”

Lina laughed. “It’s true, Lizzie,” she said. “You look like your head is on fire.”

Lizzie laughed, too, and lifted one hand to fluff her hair. She puckered her lips and fluttered her eyelashes. “He says I’m as beautiful as a red tomato.”

They were crossing Torrnick Square now. It was crowded in the square. People had just left work and were lining up at the shops and hurrying along with packages. A cluster of children sat on the pavement, playing some sort of game.

“Who is this boyfriend?” asked Lina.

But just at that moment, Lizzie tripped. She’d been strutting along being beautiful, not paying attention to her feet, and the edge of her shoe caught on an uneven place in the pavement. She staggered and fell, and as she fell she lost her grip on the sack. It hit the ground and toppled sideways, and some cans spilled out. They rolled in all different directions.

Lina reached for Lizzie’s arm. “Did you hurt yourself?” she asked, but Lizzie went scrambling after the cans so quickly it was clear she wasn’t hurt. Wanting to help, Lina went after the cans, too. Two had rolled under a bench. Another was going toward the children, who were on their feet now, watching Lizzie’s wild spiderlike motions. Lina picked up the cans under the bench, and for a second her breath stopped. One of them was a can of peaches. “Peaches,” it said right on it, and there was a picture of a yellow globe. No one she knew had seen a can of peaches in years. She looked at the other one. It was just as amazing—“Creamed Corn,” it said. Lina remembered having creamed corn once, as a thrilling treat, when she was five years old.

There was a shout. She looked up. One of the children had picked up a can. “Look at this!” he cried, and the other children gathered around him. “Applesauce!” he said, and

the children murmured, “Applesauce, applesauce,” as if they had never heard the word before.

Lizzie was on her feet. She had all the cans except for the two in Lina’s hands and the one the child had picked up. She stood there for a moment, her eyes flicking back and forth from Lina to the children. Then she smiled, a bright fake-looking smile. “Thanks for helping me,” she said. “I found these on a back shelf at the market. What a surprise, huh? You can keep those.” She waved the back of her hand at the children, waved again at Lina, and then took off, holding the sack by its neck so it hung beside her and banged against her legs.

Lina didn’t follow her. She walked home, thinking about Lizzie’s sack of cans. You simply did not find cans of peaches and applesauce and creamed corn on the back shelves of markets. Lizzie was lying. And if the cans hadn’t come from a market, where had they come from? There was only one answer: they had come from the storerooms. Somehow, Lizzie had gotten them because she worked in the storeroom office. Had she paid for them? How much? Or had she taken them without paying?

Mrs. Murdo had cooked a dinner of beet-and-bean stew for them that night. When Lina showed her the two cans, she gasped in astonishment. “Where did you get these?” she asked.

“From a friend,” said Lina.

“And where did your friend get them?”

Lina shrugged. “I don’t know.”

Mrs. Murdo frowned slightly but didn’t ask any more questions. She opened the cans, and they had a feast: creamed corn with their stew, and peaches for dessert. It was the best meal Lina had had in a very long time—but her enjoyment of it was tainted just a little by the question of where it had come from.

The next morning, Lina headed for Broad Street. Before she started delivering messages today, she was going to have a talk with Lizzie.

She spied her half a block from the storeroom office. She was sauntering along looking in shop windows. A long green scarf was wound around her neck.

Lina ran up swiftly behind her. “Lizzie,” she said.

Lizzie whirled around. When she saw Lina, she flinched. She didn’t say anything, just turned around and kept walking.

Lina caught hold of one end of the green scarf and jerked Lizzie to a halt. “Lizzie!” she said. “Stop!”

“What for?” Lizzie said. “I’m going to work.” She tried to pull away, but she didn’t get far, because Lina had a firm grip on her scarf.

Lina spoke in a low voice. There were people all around them—a couple of old men leaning against the wall, a group of chattering children just ahead, workers going toward the storerooms—and she didn’t want to be overheard. “You have to tell me where you got those cans,” she said.

“I told you. I found them on a back shelf at the market. Let go of my scarf.” Lizzie tried to wrench her scarf out of Lina’s grip, but Lina held on.

“You didn’t,” Lina said. “No market would just forget about things like that. Tell me the truth.” She gave a yank on the end of the scarf.

“Stop it!” Lizzie reached out and grabbed a handful of Lina’s hair. Lina yelped and pulled harder on the scarf, and the two of them scuffled, snatching at each other’s hair and coats. They knocked against a woman who snapped at them angrily, and finally they toppled over, sitting down hard on the pavement.

Lina was the first one to laugh. It was so much like what they used to do in fun, chasing each other and screaming with laughter. Now here they were again, nearly grown girls, sitting in a heap on the pavement.

After a moment, Lizzie laughed, too. “You dope,” she said. “All right, I’ll tell you. I sort of wanted to anyway.” Lizzie leaned forward with her elbows on her knees and lowered her voice. “Well, it’s this,” she said. “There’s a storeroom worker named Looper. He’s a carrier. Do you know him? He was two classes ahead of us. Looper Windly.”

“I know who he is,” said Lina. “I took a message for him on my first day of work. Tall, with a long skinny neck. Big teeth. Funny-looking.”

Lizzie looked hurt. “Well, I wouldn’t describe him *that* way. I think he’s handsome.”

Lina shrugged. “Okay. Go on.”

“Looper explores the storerooms. He goes into every room that isn’t locked. He wants to know the *true situation*, Lina. He’s not like most workers, who just plod along doing their jobs and then go home. He wants to find things out.”

“And what has he found out?” Lina asked.

“He’s found out that there’s still a little bit left of some rare things, just a few things in rooms here and there that have been forgotten. You know, Lina,” she said, “there are *so many* rooms down there. Some of them, way out at the edges, are marked ‘Empty’ in

the ledger book, and so no one ever goes there anymore. But Looper found out that they're not all empty."

"So he's been taking things."

"Just a few things! And not often."

"And he's giving some to you."

"Yes. Because he likes me." Lizzie smiled a little smile and hugged her arms together. I see, Lina thought. She feels *that* way about Looper.

"But Looper's stealing," said Lina. "And Lizzie—he isn't just stealing things for you. He has a store! He steals things and sells them for huge prices!"

"He does not," said Lizzie, but she looked worried.

"He does. I know because I bought something from him just a few weeks ago. He has a whole box of coloured pencils."

Lizzie scowled. "He never gave me any coloured pencils."

"He shouldn't be giving you anything— or selling things. Don't you think everyone should know about this food he found?"

"No!" Lizzie cried. "Because listen. If there's only one can of peaches left, only one person gets to have it, right? So why should everyone know? They'd just end up fighting over it. What good would that be?" Lizzie reached out and put a hand on Lina's knee. "Listen," she said. "I'll ask Looper to find some good stuff for you, too. I know he will, if I ask him."

Before she had time to think, Lina heard herself saying, "What kind of good stuff?"

Lizzie's eyes gleamed. "There's two packages of coloured paper, he told me. And some cough medicine. And there's three pairs of girls' shoes."

It was treasure. Coloured paper! And cough medicine to cure sickness, and shoes . . . she hadn't had new ones for almost two years. Lina's heart raced. What Lizzie said was true: if everyone knew there were still a few wonderful things in the storerooms, people would fight each other trying to get them. But what if no one knew? What difference would it make if she had the coloured paper, or the shoes? She suddenly wanted those things so badly she felt weak. A picture arose in her mind's eye—the shelves at Mrs. Murdo's house stocked with good things, and the three of them happier and safer than other people.

Lizzie leaned closer and lowered her voice. "Looper found a can of pineapple. I was going to split it with him, but I'll give you a bite if you promise not to tell."

Pineapple! That delectable long-lost thing that her grandmother had told her about. Was there anything wrong with having a bite of it, just to see what it was like?

"I've already tasted peaches, applesauce, and a thing called fruit cocktail," said Lizzie. "And prunes and creamed corn and cranberry sauce and asparagus . . ."

"All *that*?" Lina was astonished. "Then there's a lot of special things like that still?"

"No," said Lizzie. "Not a lot at all. In fact, we've finished all those."

"You and Looper?"

Lizzie nodded, smiling smugly. "Looper says it's all going to be gone soon anyway, why not live as well as we can right now?"

"But Lizzie, why should *you* get all that? Why you and not other people?"

"Because we found it. Because we can get at it."

"I don't think it's fair," said Lina.

Lizzie spoke as if she were talking to a not-very-bright child. "You can have some, *too*. That's what I'm *telling* you. There are still a few good things left."

But that wasn't the unfairness Lina was thinking of. It was that just two people were getting things that everyone would have wanted. She couldn't think how it should have been done. You couldn't divide a can of applesauce evenly among all the people in the city. Still, something was wrong with grabbing the good things just because you *could*. It seemed not only unfair to everyone else but bad for the person who was doing it, somehow. She remembered the hunger she'd felt when Looper showed her the coloured pencils. It wasn't a pleasant feeling. She didn't *want* to want things that way.

She stood up. "I don't want anything from Looper."

Lizzie shrugged. "Okay," she said, but there was a look of dismay on her small pale face. "Too bad for you."

"Thanks anyway," said Lina, and she set off across Torrick Square, walking fast at first and then breaking into a run.