

City of Ember Introduction and Chapter 1 Summary

The Instructions

The chief builder and the assistant builder are talking about their plans for the city of Ember. They say that the people who will be living in the city cannot leave the city for at least 200, or maybe 220 years. They will also leave instructions in a box, of how to leave the city. The box will have a lock that will only open in 220 years. The mayor of the city will have the box, but they will not know what is inside. They will have to pass it on to the next mayor and the next mayor, and keep going until the years have passed and the box opens.

The first mayor took good care of the box and so did the second mayor. However, the seventh mayor was really sick and thought if he opened the box it would help make him better. He couldn't get it opened, and died before he could give it to a new mayor to take care of. The box was left in some closet and no one knows how important it is. One day the box opened, because 220 years had passed, but no one saw it open, so no one got the instructions about leaving the city.

Assignment Day

In the city of Ember the sky was always dark and the only light came from street lights outside and lightbulbs inside. Lately the lights have been going off for no reason. When the lights go off everything goes very dark and people can't see anything at all. Things are also running out in the city and a lot of things are breaking down. Many people are worried about this.