Chapter Book Summary

In the book The City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau, Assignment Day began as a rough day for Lina. She was assigned the worst job in Ember… working in the pipeworks! However, Doon, one of Lina’s old friends, got the job of Lina’s dreams, messenger. Luckily, Doon and Lina were able to switch jobs. Ember is currently facing many problems. One of the many problems in Ember is that the generator is breaking down, causing the lights to flicker. Not only do the lights flicker frequently, but they oftentimes lead to blackouts lasting several minutes. In addition, supplies in Ember are running low.

Throughout the beginning of the book, Lina’s granny is obsessed with finding “something lost…something important.” She ransacks their apartment looking for this item. Eventually she discovers a banged up box with a fancy clasp. Inside the box was a message left for the people of Ember by the builders of the city. Unfortunately, Poppy got a hold of the message and began chewing it up. Lina grabs it out of Poppy’s mouth and tries to piece it together. Lina and Doon spend a great deal of time trying to decipher the message. Over time they learn that the message was Instructions for Egress which showed the way out of Ember! They also found a room filled with boats, paddles, matches and candles hidden behind a panel in the pipe works. While all this was happening, Lina and Doon learn that the Mayor of Ember and a supplies coordinator were stealing precious supplies from the storerooms and hoarding them for themselves. Lina and Doon tried to do the right thing by telling a guard what they learned, but later found out they were being accused of spreading vicious rumors!

Eventually, Lina and Doon launched one of the boats into the river with Poppy, along with the other supplies that they found. They took a dangerous and turbulent ride through rapids and deep pools until they came to a chamber where they dragged their boat onto shore. While sitting on a ledge waiting for Doon and Lina to gather their supplies, Poppy finds a journal that was written by one of the first inhabitants of Ember. This journal outlined how the people of Ember came to be. Then, Lina, Doon and Poppy hiked up a long, zig-zagged path to discover that not only were the pipe works underground, but entire city of Ember was too! In the end, Lina and Doon wrote a message for the townsfolk of Ember and threw it down into the city, where it landed right at Lina and Poppy’s guardian’s feet. This is where our tale ends….or is it?