

Vocabulary: Define the terms using Merriam Webster's website

Term/part of speech	Definition
diaphanous	
tenuous	
cadre	
welter	
torrid	
empyrean	
atavistic	
maxim	
laconic	
fastidious	
inexorably	
burgeon	
mitigate	
simulacrum	
melange	

Close Reading: Annotate the selection below in the margins (Doerr 24-25)

Werner Pfennig grows up three hundred miles northeast of Paris in a place called Zollverein: a four- thousand-acre coal-mining complex outside Essen, Germany. It's steel country, anthracite country, a place full of holes. Smokestacks fume and locomotives trundle back and forth on elevated conduits and leafless trees stand atop slag heaps like skeleton hands shoved up from the underworld.

Werner and his younger sister, Jutta, are raised at Children's House, a clinker-brick two-story orphanage on Viktoriastrasse whose rooms are populated with the coughs of sick children and the crying of newborns and battered trunks inside which drowse the last possessions of deceased parents: patchwork dresses, tarnished wedding cutlery, faded ambrotypes of fathers swallowed by the mines.

Werner's earliest years are the leanest. Men brawl over jobs outside the Zollverein gates, and chicken eggs sell for two million reichsmarks apiece, and rheumatic fever stalks Children's House like a wolf. There is no butter or meat. Fruit is a memory. Some evenings, during the worst months, all the house directress has to feed her dozen wards are cakes made from mustard powder and water.

But seven-year-old Werner seems to float. He is undersized and his ears stick out and he speaks with a high, sweet voice; the whiteness of his hair stops people in their tracks. Snowy, milky, chalky. A color that is the absence of color. Every morning he ties his shoes, packs newspaper inside his coat as insulation against the cold, and begins interrogating the world. He captures snowflakes, tadpoles, hibernating frogs; he coaxes bread from bakers with none to sell; he regularly appears in the kitchen with fresh milk for the babies. He makes things, too: paper boxes, crude biplanes, toy boats with working rudders.

Every couple of days he'll startle the directress with some unanswerable query: "Why do we get hiccups, Frau Elena?"

Or: "If the moon is so big, Frau Elena, how come it looks so little?"

Or: "Frau Elena, does a bee know it's going to die if it stings somebody?"

What is the main emphasis or point of the passage? Include evidence.

Close Reading Two: Annotate the selection below in the margins (Doerr 27-28)

Congenital cataracts. Bilateral. Irreparable. “Can you see this?” ask the doctors. “Can you see this?” Marie-Laure will not see anything for the rest of her life. Spaces she once knew as familiar—the four-room flat she shares with her father, the little tree-lined square at the end of their street—have become labyrinths bristling with hazards. Drawers are never where they should be. The toilet is an abyss. A glass of water is too near, too far; her fingers too big, always too big.

What is blindness? Where there should be a wall, her hands find nothing. Where there should be nothing, a table leg gouges her shin. Cars growl in the streets; leaves whisper in the sky; blood rustles through her inner ears. In the stairwell, in the kitchen, even beside her bed, grown-up voices speak of despair.

“Poor child.”

“Poor Monsieur LeBlanc.”

“Hasn’t had an easy road, you know. His father

dead in the war, his wife dead in childbirth. And now this?”

“Like they’re cursed.”

“Look at her. Look at him.”

“Ought to send her away.”

Those are months of bruises and wretchedness:

rooms pitching like sailboats, half-open doors striking Marie-Laure’s face. Her only sanctuary is in bed, the hem of her quilt at her chin, while her father smokes another cigarette in the chair beside her, whittling away at one of his tiny models, his little hammer going tap tap tap, his little square of sandpaper making a rhythmic, soothing rasp. The despair doesn’t last. Marie-Laure is too young and her father is too patient. There are, he assures her, no such things as curses. There is luck, maybe, bad or good. A slight inclination of each day toward success or failure. But no curses.

What is the main emphasis or point of the passage? Include evidence.
