

Chapters 1-10

1. filthy
disgustingly dirty
He was **filthy** and pale and dried out and I thought he was dead.
2. demolition
the act of destroying completely
It was more like a **demolition** site or a rubbish dump or like one of those ancient warehouses they keep pulling down at the wharf.
3. manage
handle effectively
I just wanted him to shut up, but he whispered that toward the end Ernie couldn't **manage** the stairs.
4. massive
consisting of great mass
The outside doors to the back lane must have fallen off years ago and there were dozens of **massive** planks nailed across the entrance.
5. rubbish
worthless material that is to be disposed of
The people that took the **rubbish** out of the house were supposed to take it out of the garage as well, but they took one look at the place and said they wouldn't go in it even for extra money.
6. scatter
strew or distribute over an area
Heaps of water pipes and great boxes of rusty nails were **scattered** on the floor.
7. arid
lacking sufficient water or rainfall
The place stank of rot and **arid** dust
8. collapse
fall apart
It was like the whole thing was sick of itself and would **collapse** in a heap and have to get bull-dozed away.
9. lurch
move abruptly
I shoved the door and it **lurched** half shut on its single hinge.
10. random
lacking any definite plan or order or purpose
I thought of **Random** Road where we'd come from, and all my old pals like Leakey and Coot.

11. peer
look searchingly
I **peered** down into a great stone jar and saw the bones of some little animal that had died in there.
12. shudder
shake, as from cold
He thumped the side of the garage and the whole thing **shuddered**.
13. ragged
having an irregular outline
Every time I did drop off I saw him coming out of the garage door and coming through the **ragged** backyard to the house.
14. bother
take the trouble to do something; concern oneself
I couldn't be **bothered** with it all.
15. fossil
the remains of a plant or animal from a past geological age
"Been there so long it's nearly a **fossil**," he said.
16. fuss
an excited state of agitation
She tried to make a **fuss** over me and kept asking me about the journey and about school.
17. famished
extremely hungry
"I'm **famished**," he said.
18. sufficiency
an adequate quantity
I've had an ample **sufficiency**, thank you.
19. arrange
plan, organise, and carry out
I'd also like to see your baby sister if that can be **arranged**.
20. sheen
the visual property of something that shines
I saw the **sheens** of gold and blue where the early light shined on its black.
21. stunt
check the growth or development of
His fingers were twisted and **stunted**.
22. slump
fall or sink heavily
His head **slumped** back against the wall.

23. congealed
congealed into jelly; solidified by cooling
The red sauce below his lips was like **congealed** blood.
24. aside
on or to one side
I had to push **aside** a little heap of hard furry balls.
25. stench
a distinctive odour that is offensively unpleasant
Not just the Chinese food, but the **stench** of the other dead things he ate: the bluebottles, the spiders.

Chapters 11-22

1. ancestor
someone from whom you are descended
He showed us a poster of our **ancestors**, of the endless shape-changing that had led to us.
2. thrive
grow vigorously
“How can she **thrive** when it’s all so dirty and all in such a mess?”
3. derelict
worn and broken down by hard use
We should never have come to this stinking **derelict** place.
4. vandal
someone who wilfully destroys or defaces property
“It’s just to keep the **vandals** out.”
5. ascend
travel up
We **ascended** three stairways, passed three landings.
6. jut
extend out or project in space
Light came in through an arched window that **jutted** out through the roof.
7. scurry
to move about or proceed hurriedly
Shiny black beetles **scurried** away from me.
8. inhibit
limit the range or extent of
We believe that schools **inhibit** the natural curiosity, creativity, and intelligence of children.

9. descend
come from
“Do you believe we’re **descended** from apes?”
10. muddle
mix up or confuse
Truth and dreams are always getting **muddled**.
11. figment
a contrived or fantastic idea
Maybe thought I was a **figment**.
12. dismay
the feeling of despair in the face of obstacles
The little ones spend the day in sighing and **dismay**.
13. adapt
make fit for, or change to suit a new purpose
It is **adapted** so that the bird can fly.
14. enable
provide the means to perform some task
Over millions of years, the bird has developed an anatomy that **enables** it to fly.
15. eerie
suggestive of the supernatural; mysterious
There was an **eerie** light.
16. absolutely
totally and definitely; without question
Absolutely exhausted!
17. seize
take hold of; grab
Don’t let everything **seize** up.
18. wince
draw back, as with fear or pain
Some lay in bed, smiling and knitting, **wincing** as they called across the ward to each other.
19. cluster
a grouping of a number of similar things
At the far end, a **cluster** of doctors and students in white coats gathered around a man in black.
20. slink
walk stealthily
“Sometimes it’s things that swim, sometimes it’s things that **slink** through the night, sometimes it’s things that creep and crawl, but just now it’s things that fly.”

21. fierce
marked by extreme and violent energy
Then an owl, with its great round head, its pointed beak, its **fierce** claws.
22. piercing
having or demonstrating ability to recognise or draw fine distinctions
Her eyes were as **piercing** as Mina's, but more gentle.
23. clench
squeeze together tightly
She **clenched** her fists.
24. timber
a beam made of wood
The ceiling creaked and dust fell from the rotten **timbers**.
25. stifle
smother or suppress
I heard Mina **stifle** a cry.
26. scrawny
being very thin
She lifted his filthy cuff and touched his **scrawny** twisted wrists.
27. brink
the edge of a steep place
She teetered on the **brink**.
28. whimper
cry weakly or softly
He **whimpered** in pain.
29. totter
move without being stable, as if threatening to fall
He **tottered** and wobbled as he rose.
30. hoarse
deep and harsh sounding as if from shouting or illness
His breathing was **hoarse**, uneven.

Chapters 23-34

1. beckon
summon with a wave, nod, or some other gesture
She grinned and **beckoned** me over the wall when she saw me standing there.

2. punctuation
the use of marks to clarify meaning of written material.
Every so often, Miss Clarts checked that they were neat and the **punctuation** was right and the spellings were right.
3. sarcasm
witty language used to convey insults or scorn
One of the things we hate about schools is the **sarcasm** that's in them.
4. parcel
a wrapped container
We stepped inside, carrying our **parcels**.
5. crouch
sit on one's heels
"Exhausted," he squeaked as we **crouched** beside him.
6. agony
intense feelings of suffering; acute mental or physical pain
He groaned and twisted in **agony**.
7. unfurl
to unroll, unfold, or spread out
When they were released, the wings began to **unfurl** from his shoulder blades.
8. quiver
shake with fast, tremulous movements
He lay facedown and his wings continued to **quiver** into shape above him.
9. drone
an unchanging intonation
I listened to the **drone** of the city outside, to the clatter of the hospital.
10. hobble
walk impeded by some physical limitation or injury
She **hobbled** away, singing "Lord of the Dance" to herself.
11. distracted
having the attention diverted especially because of anxiety
He was too **distracted** to ask again.
12. extinct
no longer in existence
"We believe that dinosaurs became **extinct**," said Mina.
13. evolution
sequence of events involved in the development of a species
"There's no end to **evolution**," said Mina.

14. **distress**
extreme physical pain
The doctor says I'm in **distress**.
15. **recoil**
spring back; spring away from an impact
"Gotcha," he said, and his hand **recoiled** like he'd fired.
16. **mope**
be apathetic, gloomy, or dazed
"Michael's been **moping**," he said.
17. **ignorant**
uneducated in general; lacking knowledge or sophistication
You think you're special but you're just as **ignorant** as anybody.
18. **silhouette**
an outline of a solid object as cast by its shadow
The moon hung over the city, a great orange ball with the **silhouettes** of steeples and chimney stacks upon it.
19. **rely**
have confidence or faith in
I cursed myself, because in order to go to him now I had to **rely** on Mina.
20. **ajar**
slightly open
The door into the garden was **ajar**.
21. **prowl**
move about in or as if in a predatory manner
The cat **prowled** to her side, brushed itself against her legs.
22. **blunder**
make one's way clumsily or blindly
We **blundered** through the dark.
23. **glisten**
the quality of shining with a bright reflected light
We saw nothing of his eyes, his pale cheeks; just his black silhouette against the **glistening** night.
24. **penetrating**
having or demonstrating ability to recognise or draw fine distinctions
Their eyes were darker, more empty, more **penetrating**.
25. **efficient**
being effective without wasting time or effort or expense
He was trying to be all brisk and **efficient** but he pressed his lips together and looked at me and I saw the scared look in his eyes.

26. tousle
disarrange or rumple; dishevel
Rasputin came to me and **tousled** my hair.
27. cavernous
being or suggesting a large dark enclosed space
He stared out at us through **cavernous** eyes.
28. disgust
strong feelings of dislike
A few of the others shuddered in **disgust**.
29. abandoned
forsaken by owner or inhabitants
I wrote a story about a boy exploring some **abandoned** warehouses by the river.
30. flee
run away quickly
"So he took his wings and **fled**."

Chapters 35-46

1. lumbering
slow and laborious because of weight
I drew the world as the baby might see it: the long hospital ward filled with **lumbering** adults, the networks of wires and tubes and bleeping instruments filling the foreground, the faces of nurses smiling down.
2. ancient
very old
Some of them were songs of Blake's, some were **ancient** folk songs.
3. victim
an unfortunate person who suffers from adverse circumstances
"Owls eat their **victims** whole, Michael," she said.
4. regurgitate
feed through the beak by bringing back swallowed food
Then they **regurgitate** the parts that can't be digested.
5. fledgling
young bird that has just fledged or become capable of flying
We talked about the **fledglings** in the nest above us.
6. plunder
destroy and strip of its possession
They'll dream about vicious children **plundering** the nest.

7. fragile
easily broken or damaged or destroyed
What would I feel when they opened the baby's **fragile** chest, when they cut into her tiny heart?
8. oblivious
lacking conscious awareness of
I wanted to be all alone in an attic like Skellig, with just the owls and the moonlight and an **oblivious** heart.
9. blare
make a loud noise
And then Dad's car came, with its **blaring** engine and its glaring lights, and the fear just increased and increased and increased.
10. tepid
moderately warm
And then we fought, my dad and I, while we crunched burnt toast and swigged **tepid** tea.
11. gape
be wide open
I started to ask what I was looking for, but then I saw the first of them, a little brown feathered ball with its beak **gaping** in the darkness beneath the hedge.
12. wary
marked by keen caution and watchful prudence
The parents waited, **wary** of us; then at last they dropped into the garden.
13. despair
a state in which all hope is lost or absent
Sometimes she gave up in **despair** and she just lay weeping in the pitch darkness.
14. burrow
move through by or as by digging
She **burrowed** past the tangled roots of great trees.
15. astonishing
so surprisingly impressive as to stun or overwhelm
Birds were ragged and black against the **astonishing** sky.
16. invalid
someone who is incapacitated by a chronic illness or injury
She held my arm, like I was an old man, or an **invalid**.
17. hostile
characterised by enmity or ill will
In the lane, an unknown cat hunched behind a rubbish bin, and watched us pass with **hostile** eyes.

18. overwhelm

overcome, as with emotions or perceptual stimuli

It was possible to be **overwhelmed** by the presence of so much beauty in the world.

19. petty

small and of little importance

“And to be quite honest, Mrs. Dando, the last thing Michael needs is to be troubled by **petty** things like football and school.”

20. remnant

a small part remaining after the main part no longer exists

It was long after dusk when Mina and I went out with the **remnants** of 27 and 53 and a bottle of brown ale in a paper bag.

21. contentment

happiness with one's situation in life

He ate again, sighed with **contentment**.

22. astounding

so surprisingly impressive as to stun or overwhelm

Then we went silently down through the house and we stepped out with Whisper into the **astounding** night.

23. sprawl

go, come, or spread in a rambling or irregular way

Then he got me with a thumping tackle into the back of my legs that sent us both **sprawling**.

24. gorge

overeat or eat immodestly

We watched the fledglings **gorge** themselves.

25. vagrant

a wanderer with no established residence or means of support

Looks like you've had a **vagrant** spending a night or two in there.

