Word Substitution List for One Amazing Thing

Chapter 1 (pages 1-8)

Pg 1  Chaucer – A writer from the 1300s

Pg 1  Medieval Lit – short for Medieval Literature

Pg 2  nubby - bumpy

Pg 2  frostily – in a crisp or cold manner, unfriendly

Pg 3  fidgety – moving around a lot, nervously

Pg 3  hair in spikes – standing straight up on the top of her head

Pg 3  Missy – a girl’s nickname used by someone in authority; not her real name

Pg 3  slaving at their jobs – working hard

Pg 4  Wall Street Journal – newspaper reporting on financial news

Pg 4  deli – short for delicatessen (a place to buy meat sandwiches)

Pg 4  frisk – search you for weapons by patting your body from head to toe

Pg 4  Quaker Oats – brand name

Pg 5  UN – United Nations

Pg 5  Bharatanatyam – Indian classical dance

Pg 5  schizophrenic meals – crazy, rushed, disorganized

Pg 5  volte-face – an about face, or complete turn around in position or opinion

Pg 5  golden years – the years after retirement, generally 65 and older

Pg 5  Kolkata – city in India

Pg 6  Rabindra Sangeet – a type of Indian music, “with expressions of romanticism”

Pg 6  Kulu Manali and Goa – mountainous area of India and beautiful seaside town in India, respectively

Pg 6  hedonistic – self-indulgent, the excessive pursuit of pleasure

Pg 6  wooden togetherness – stiff, unfeeling relationships

Pg 6  angst-filled – fearful, anxiety filled

Pg 6  Nobel laureate – someone who has been awarded the prestigious Nobel prize

Pg 6  dyspepsia – indigestion

Pg 8  gossamer – thin, light, insubstantial

Pg 8  Student Union – a popular meeting and socializing place on a university campus

Pg 8  dim sum – Chinese dish/food, dumplings

Pg 8  doomsday orators – people who stand at busy pedestrian intersections and shout about the end of the world. Their usual purpose is to convince people to turn to God.

Chapter 2 (pages 11-21)

Pg 11  keening – cry out in grief/sadness

Pg 11  inexorable – impossible to stop

Pg 11  inhaler – device used by people with breathing problems (asthma) to help them breathe

Pg 12  acrid – unpleasant, irritating (but not used with people)

Pg 13  something serious – very seriously

Pg 13  expiation – to make amends, make up for something wrong you did

Pg 14  unawares – unaware, not aware of a situation

Pg 14  quiking – sudden movement, expressing surprise or amusement

Pg 14  Krishna – Hindu diety

Pg 15  auntie brigade – aunt group

Pg 15  ecumenical – usually refers to Christianity, but in this case merely means completely or wholly

Pg 15  sambar powder – a spice blend from South India

Pg 15  avakaya pickle – a variety of pickle popular in South India
Bollywood – movies made in India

dowry – money or property given by the bride to the groom’s family

capacious swivel chairs – roomy chairs that twist or turn (like many office chairs)
eyebrows threaded – a professional technique for shaping women’s eyebrows
elaborate lacquered buns – a women’s hairstyle with the hair in a circle at the back of the head

swashbuckling – very masculine, strong

disarming smile – a smile that puts you off your guard (it “disarms” you)

Maasoorpak – sweet treats popular in India

Shahrukh Khan megahit – very popular movie starring Shahrukh Khan (Indian actor)
dosas – South Indian pancake-like food

betel nuts – common name of the areca nut that grows in Asia

doodle – scribble, draw small insignificant pictures without giving them much thought

inner tectonic shift – very large change/shift (like the shifting of the earth’s tectonic plates)
groped or grabbed – refers to touching her body

dallying – messing around with

karma – actions today that influence fate in the future

Lord Ganapathi – Hindu diety

ducking under – hiding under the counter

siphoned away – taken away

ricocheted – bounced wildly

Tamil – language spoken in India

Ganapathi – Indian diety

miasma – unpleasant smell

Tylenol – medication for headaches and other pain

The line’s dead – the phone line is not working, so the phones are “dead”

Walmart – national store chain with inexpensive items

Band-Aids – brand name for bandages

Chapter 3 (pages 22-34)
dry-swallow – swallow without the aid of water or other liquid

pad Thai – Thailand food made with noodles

swabs – Q-tips

allusion – an expression that brings something else to mind without saying it specifically

fumbled – tried to find

held it to his mouth, and squeezed – Cameron is using his inhaler to help him breathe

pool together – combine

improvident – thoughtless

Aesop’s summer-singing cricket – a character in one of Aesop’s centuries-old fables

squirreled things away – hidden things

sling – a piece of cloth that the arm sits in to keep it still

enterprising – creative, someone who finds solutions

bitter bark of a laugh – a sharp, harsh laugh

Xanax – an anti-anxiety (calming) prescription drug

smile of complicity – a smile of togetherness in something secret

sardonically

cordon off – rope off, mark the boundaries of an area

sheepish – embarrassed

divining rod – a stick used to find water underground
Pg 27  **Dhuhr prayer** – the second prayer of the day in the Muslim religion
Pg 27  **black namaz cap** – head covering (cap) for men in the Muslim religion
Pg 28  **chai** – a type of tea
Pg 28  **Towers** – a reference to New York’s Twin Towers, destroyed in the 9/11 terrorist attack
Pg 28  **salwaar kameez outfit** – a traditional Indian outfit (clothing)
Pg 28  **masjid** – another word for mosque (Muslim place of worship)
Pg 28  **hijab** – head covering worn by some Muslim women
Pg 29  **Allah** – God
Pg 29  **Mecca** – the holy city of Islam
Pg 29  **ballooned** – swelled
Pg 29  **Kaaba** – a small stone building in Mecca, which is what Muslims point toward when praying
Pg 29  **Inshallah** – means “if Allah wills it” in Islam
Pg 29  **kohl-lined eyes** – eyes decorated (lined) with black make-up
Pg 30  **stutters** – stops and starts
Pg 31  **clubbing** – to night clubs
Pg 31  **duty** – required
Pg 32  **pencil light** – a thin flashlight (about the size of a pencil) that projects a small pinpoint of light
Pg 34  **fetch** – get

**Chapter 4 (pages 35-45)**

Pg 35  **get over it** – (said to Malathi) move past your anger; stop being angry
Pg 36  **petticoat** – woman’s undergarment, like a slip
Pg 36  **bindi** – decorative mark worn on the forehead of Indian women
Pg 36  **bun** – a hairstyle with the hair in a tight circle at the back of the head
Pg 36  **unglued** – go crazy
Pg 36  **Establishment** – the ruling class (White people, in this case)
Pg 36  **ahimsa** – principle of nonviolence toward all living things (in Hindi, Buddhist, and Jain traditions)
Pg 37  **chips of unforgiving** – eyes with no forgiveness in them
Pg 37  **Freudian** – psychiatrist who believed everything was done on purpose; there is no coincidence in life, or random, unimportant thoughts
Pg 37  **mythic proportions** – huge, larger than life
Pg 37  **culled from . . . the glossies** – taken from the pages of magazines
Pg 38  **ficus tree** – tree with thick leaves, often grown indoors in pots
Pg 38  **Jacuzzi** – bathtub with jets of water, used for massage
Pg 38  **bidet** – French style of toilet
Pg 38  **underlings** – people lower on the hierarchy, entry-level employees in this instance
Pg 38  **time-pass girl** – someone to spend time with, only because you have too much time to spend and are bored. Not an important relationship.
Pg 38  **dispirited** – lackluster, sad looking, lacking energy
Pg 39  **fairy pools** – pools of water like in a children’s fantasy
Pg 40  **pencil light** – a flashlight with a very narrow beam of light (about the size of a pencil point)
Pg 41  **staked out** – claimed as their own spot
Pg 41  **Dunhills** – a luxury brand of cigarettes
Pg 41  **Lake Tahoe** – a large, beautiful lake in the Nevada mountains
Pg 42  **King Arthur’s court** – a legendary British leader and warrior
Pg 42  **Camelot** – the castle associated with King Arthur’s court
Lancelot – one of King Arthur’s men (and Mr. Pritchett’s first name)
camellias – a rose-type flower
out-and-out – complete
dust bunnies – small tufts (or balls) of dust
Bay Bridge – the San Francisco Bay Bridge
fumbled – reached around in (her pocket)
cross-legged – sitting on the floor with both knees bent and the feet tucked under the knees
Juicy Fruit – a brand of chewing gum

Camellias – a rose-type flower
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Dust bunnies – small tufts (or balls) of dust
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Fumbled – reached around in (her pocket)
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Chapter 5 (pages 47-64)
scoured – looked over very carefully
unearth – discover
trouble magnet – someone who attracts trouble (like a magnet)
crowbar – an iron (usually) tool used to leverage heavy objects
tug-of-war – a pulling game, with two teams on opposite ends of a rope trying to pull the other team across a line in the middle
cooker – a cooking pot, or pressure cooker
thrum – a low, background sense of worry
Sheetrock – a building material for walls
fisted – wrapped in her fist
Gulliver – a reference to the main character in Jonathan Swift’s tale of adventure (1700s)
Lilliput – the city Gulliver finds, inhabited by tiny (less than 6”) people, making Gulliver a giant by comparison
blob – pile of something
hiccuping sobs – crying hard
Jenga tower – a game (Jenga) in which the players build a tower of small wooden blocks and then try to remove them one by one without the tower falling over

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the advances he had made – a reference to his kissing Malathi
parley – talk

Chapter 6 (pages 66-84)

Chaucer – book written by Chaucer in the 1300s
melee – fight, confused disruption
crazed – wild, crazy, intense
Lord of the Flies – 1954 book about boys that fought to the death
worried the sleeve – rubbed it
Kleenex – soft tissue
half-witted – dumb
déjà vu – French phrase describing the feeling that you’ve been somewhere/heard something before
shuttered – closed
know our business – know about our personal lives
Gramma – grandma
trained on her – focused on her
Kool-Aid – sugary powdered drink mix
carpe diem – Latin for “seize the day” or make the most of the present moment
rickshaw – a two-wheeled vehicle, usually pulled by a person, providing rides to others
bean cakes/fresh lychees – Chinese foods
koi – fish
rupees – Indian money
heated arguments – serious, intense arguments
gouty – from a painful medical condition, gout
the holy ones – the nuns and priests
match – a man who will become her husband
pencil skirt – a very straight, narrow style of skirt

Chapter 7 (pages 86-90)

Hershey’s Kisses, Dove, Revlon – brand names of chocolate, soap, and cosmetics, respectively
Chapter 8 (pages 92-108)

Pg 92  garage sale – a sale held in a person’s garage. Items are very cheap in a garage sale.
Pg 92  Hires root beer – a non-alcoholic soda
Pg 93  washeteria – laundromat
Pg 93  nightie – nightgown
Pg 93  shift – simple dress
Pg 94  Howdy Doody – a 1950s cowboy TV show
Pg 94  I Love Lucy – 1950s comedy TV show
Pg 94  Lassie Come Home – 1940s radio show about a dog, Lassie
Pg 95  Shoot, girl – Hey, girl or Darn, girl
Pg 95  death warmed over – to look like someone who died
Pg 95  Gunsmoke – a 1950s TV show about cowboys
Pg 95  riveted – completed engrossed
Pg 96  cat’s cradle of stories – complicated web of stories
Pg 97  heels – women’s shoes with high heels
Pg 97  baggage – refers to their boys (in this case)
Pg 98  Memphis – city in Tennessee
Pg 98  bitches – complains
Pg 98  sweetish – sweet (probably marijuana)

Chapter 9 (pages 109-126)

Pg 109 dowry – money and other valuables that the bride gives to her husband’s family upon marriage
Pg 109 fell to – began to
Pg 109 volley – a barrage; many instructions one after another
Pg 110 inner sanctum – an interior room
Pg 110 Brahmin family – pampered, rich
Pg 110 permed – hair that has been chemically treated so that it curls
Pg 110 coiffed – styled (from French)
clucking — a negative word sometimes used to describe women’s speech

foundation, kohl, blush — types of makeup/cosmetics

bindi — a small decoration affixed to the forehead of Indian women

parasol — a feminine umbrella, used more to keep the sun off women than to protect from rain

dispatched — sent

knew what was what — was aware of; understood life

hullabaloo — outcry, commotion

stormed — walked or marched angrily

yoke — burden, responsibility

gratis — free

soaked up — learned, or to take in a lot of something

end papers — materials used in treating hair

exact a heavy penalty — cause or result in a heavy penalty

cream — top (in terms of importance)

flicked — tossed, flipped

rupees — Indian money

finicky — picky

hot-tempered — quick to anger (the opposite is even-tempered)

perming — curling the hair with chemicals (a beauty salon treatment)

unorthodox means — an unusual, not quite legal, way of doing things

appellation — title of Elder Sister

privy to — in the know about

skeletons lurking in the closets of — dark secrets (skeletons) that are hidden from the rest of the world

meddle in — mess around with, tamper with
exfoliant – a scrub for skin

sported – displayed

sped invectives – shouted or screamed obscenities and insults

even the score – get back at someone; make things even again

bad karma – bad luck or fate

apoplectic – overcome with anger, exploding with anger

in check – within reason, not out of control

choke out – barely able to speak

peals – sounds (of laughter)
goonda – a hired thug, someone who hurts other people for money

displays – shows of affection

keep your temper – stay calm, keep your anger under control

Exfoliant – a scrub for skin

Sported – displayed

Spewed invectives – shouted or screamed obscenities and insults

Even the score – get back at someone; make things even again

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Displays – shows of affection

Keep your temper – stay calm, keep your anger under control

Chapter 10 (pages 127-132)

couldn’t feel for – couldn’t feel any emotion for

high-society – upper class, rich people

mousy – small, mouse-like

going out with – dating

spoiled – ruined

pinned – placed

puffs – inhales of a cigarette

in some awe – in high regard (or, thought he was awesome)

Sarge – short for Sargeant (referring to Cameron)

Chapter 11 (pages 133-143)

quad – a grassy area on a university campus

skimpy – small; clothes that don’t cover very much of the body

Exfoliant – a scrub for skin

Sported – displayed

Spewed invectives – shouted or screamed obscenities and insults

Even the score – get back at someone; make things even again

Bad karma – bad luck or fate

Apoplectic – overcome with anger, exploding with anger

In check – within reason, not out of control

Choke out – barely able to speak

Peals – sounds (of laughter)
Goonda – a hired thug, someone who hurts other people for money

Displays – shows of affection

Keep your temper – stay calm, keep your anger under control

Non-desi - ??????

Hottest – prettiest, usually (but not in this case – read on!)

Public display of affection – also called PDA; includes things like hugging, kissing, etc. in public

Live and let live – don’t judge other people or interfere with their lives

Crude comments – in this case, crude refers to harsh sexual comments. In general, crude means uncivilized, unpolished

Kebabs – food (on a stick, usually cooked over an open fire)

Dying to go – really, really wanted to go (but was not literally dying)

Zardosi lengha – heavily embroidered dress

Figured it out – understood

License number – of the car they were driving

Detainees – people who are held back (detained) somewhere

Skip class – miss class

No state – no condition, in this case not thinking clearly enough, not calm enough

Courtship – romantic dating period

Antics – actions, behaviors, usually of a childish nature

Chapatis – food

Stroke – a damaging medical condition where the brain does not get enough blood

Shorted out – quit functioning (usually this term refers to electricity)

Reparation – trying to repair a wrong done to someone, usually by paying them money. Often this is between a large group, like a government, and a group of people it has wronged.

Stir up – cause

Goes a long way – buys many things

On their radar – noticeable
NRI – non-resident Indian

flat – apartment

pull – influence (powerful people)

Victorian – style of house, usually very ornate and made of wood

bay windows – large windows that stick out from the house in a semi-circle

She’s coming down – she = the ceiling

milling – moving or standing around

licked – touched

hallucinating – imagining things

tidings – messages, greetings

shouldered – pushed, using his shoulders

toilet tank – the tall, square back of the toilet that fills with water after each flush. Not the round bowl with the seat.

let him be – leave him alone

watching one another’s backs – taking care of each other, protecting each other

Chapter 12 (pages 144-159)
a pleaser – someone who likes to please other people

metamorphosis – transformation, change

angst – anger

Kumon – a tutoring company

Dragon Ball Z and Knights of the Old Republic – games

went above my head – were too hard for me to understand

detention – a school punishment requiring the student to stay after school for a period of time

cut themselves – this refers to actually cutting oneself lightly (non-fatally) and repeatedly with a sharp object; cutting is a self-destructive behavior thought to indicate deeper mental or emotional problems

keep it to ourselves – keep this a secret

rudimentaries – basics

embouchure – where the mouth is placed on the flute

gabbled – talked very fast

sonatas – a type of music

confiscated – kept away from; taken

Danube – German river

avert the evil eye – avoid bad luck; a superstition against bragging (excessive pride)

ascension – Lily’s rise (ascension) in her family’s eyes

MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology, considered the top science and technology university in the US

credentials – qualifications, awards, etc.

progeny – children

Borders – a book store

38 – bus or subway or other mass transit

flitted – flew, danced

projecting my own gloom – transferring her own sadness onto Mark

Tin Man – a fictional character from the Wizard of Oz made entirely of tin/aluminum

paraphernalia – stuff

go ballistic – become crazy or hysterical

schlepping – driving (could also refer to carrying)

nagged – bothered, bugged, annoyed

shouting matches – arguing loudly (as if shouting were a game or match)

retaliated – got back at someone

cutting class – not going to class

cliché – an overused phrase or word, making it almost meaningless
bottlebrushes – plants/bushes

screeching – screaming

pterodactyl – flying dinosaur

Down syndrome – a birth disorder causing severe physical and mental challenges

trills – a musical term

proprietary – like he owned Lily

grudge – bad feeling

fancied – liked

incensed – angry

corroborated – confirmed

go-go glasses – a word from the 1960’s meaning chic in a party-girl kind of way

stiletto heels – very high heels

skipped class – missed class on purpose

suitors – men who were interested in dating Uma’s mother

query – question

use the facilities – use the bathroom

cripple – someone with a physical disability (not a kind word)

belligerent – hostile and aggressive

dozing – sleeping

acting up – becoming worse

plot – plan

fixing prices – setting (or determining) prices

do the books – do the accounting (numbers)

put any money down – make a deposit or down payment on buying the business

equanimous – even-tempered, calm

mantra - a word or simple phrase repeated over and over again

constipation – a feeling that you have to go to the bathroom, but can’t

knotted – cramped, felt tense

amphibian croak – like a frog

fetched – got

shawl – a knitted piece of cloth that wraps around the shoulders

motley wear – inexpensive/unmatched clothing

mausoleum – a burial place for the deceased person’s ashes

chafe – rub

founded – dwindled, decreased almost to a stop

Chapter 13 (pages 161-173)

spoiled – children who are over-indulged

sharpest – smartest (in this case)

assiduously – carefully, diligently

mediocre – average

pay off – be successful, make them happy about their investment in him

dangle – hold in the air in front of someone; to tempt someone

dowry – money or valuables that a woman brings into her marriage for her husband’s family

bangles – jewelry

people in high places – important people with jobs at the top of their companies

fancied – thought of

congregated – gathered

countenance – face

posh – lavish, chic, expensive-looking

sinfully expensive – very expensive

my treat – I’m buying (my gift to you)

wooed – to charm (romantically)

chink in his armor – weakness
grilling – questioning
jovially – happily
Jekyllian – a complete personality change (refers to fictional characters Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde)
snub – ignore
scandalously expensive – very expensive
trust – money set aside by her parents for her
defence – respect
backwater – backwards, old-fashioned
made it up – got back together, apologized and were happy again
rift – split, break
beholden – in debt (how much I owed to her)
string-pulling – using one’s power and influence to get favors (in this case, to get Mangalam a job)
decreed – said, as in an order or a law
break down – cry more
pouring out – telling her (pouring the thoughts out of my head)
frayed – torn
hostel – an inexpensive hotel
the universe – fate
conflagration – a large fire
stalked – walked stiffly
bad-mouthing – speaking unkindly about
physical relations – sex
shot me – gave me
at liberty – allowed
warrant – an official order to arrest someone
embezzled – stealing money indirectly through illegal accounting
privy to – in the know about
niceties – small talk; meaningless
high-up – someone at a high level in the organization
make amends – say you’re sorry; make things right again
baksheesh – a bribe
changed hands – was paid
embroil – engage
laughingstock – someone everyone laughs at
thug – a large, violent, mean man
another dimension – a dream-like state
pincers – claws that pinch
crocodile – a running and tagging game children play
cow-dung – cow poop
bleats – makes a sound
pump – refers to an outdoor water pump
flecks – small pieces
coat – cover
snare – trap
grimace – frown
jab – poke
prolonged fit – a long period of coughing
Sub-Zero – an expensive brand of refrigerator
tidy the house – clean the house
English trifle – a cake and custard dessert with fruit
irked – irritated
equanimity – calm
greens – green leafy vegetables like lettuce, kale, spinach
bourgeois – upper class, materialistic
people watch – to watch people as they come and go, doing their business

age spots – discolorations on the skin caused by aging (and sun exposure)

Coke-bottle glasses – very thick glasses

quadruped – a cane with four (quad) legs for added stability

gravely – seriously

dawdles – wastes time; moves slowly

swoon – in this case it means the men loved her trifle

clamor – ask excitedly

monogrammed – engraved with her initials

harbored – held, kept safe

sarcophagus – a type of Egyptian coffin (box for dead people)

pressed sheets – sheets (cloth on the bed) that have been ironed

stomach pumped – an unpleasant medical procedure that removes the contents of the stomach

adroitly – expertly

maitre d – French for the head waiter (almost like a manager) in a restaurant

sci-fi – short for science fiction

gore – blood and guts

social worker – someone who helps people with their relationships, school, etc.

IV needles – short for intravenous needles. (Usually in the hand, they transport medicine into the patient)

silhouette – a shadow, no details are visible

pretense – pretending

shucking – discarding

captivated – in love with

bane of your existence – an enormous difficulty in someone’s life

Formica – a brand name for a type of countertop material

proposed – asked her to marry him

secondhand – used

asking Vivienne out – asking Vivienne for a date

tantrum-throwing – to become very angry and throw oneself on the ground

follow the yellow brick road – a reference to the book/movie The Wizard of Oz, where the main character, Dorothy, is told to follow a yellow brick road to find a magical city

Tulsa – a city in Oklahoma

Debbie’s fallen face – Debbie’s face looks unhappy (her smile has fallen off her face)

maid of honor – the most important female the bride selects to be in the wedding

happily-ever-after – describes the ending of a story where everyone lives happily forever (often by getting married)

miniscule – tiny

spool – go on and on

palmistry – the art of knowing about a person by looking at their hands (palms)

vitals – short for vital signs, things like heart rate, pulse, breathing, etc.

pursed – puckered

delusional – not understanding reality

lethargy – tiredness, fatigue

malaise – sickness

cavities – holes, emptiness (normally this word refers to the teeth)

bags of worry under his eyes – puffiness under the eyes

primal – basic

impeded – challenged

subterranean – below the earth (or, in this case, subconscious)
malevolent – mean, sinister
quake – short for earthquake
head bowed – looking down
trained . . . on – pointed (the flashlight) at
procrastination – delaying doing something until a later time

malevolent
quake
head bowed
trained . . . on
procrastination

Chapter 15 (pages 189-200)
as such – as a holy man
beatific – shining, radiant
Muni – short for municipal (city) bus
hospice – a place where people are lovingly cared for when they are near death
nondescript – ordinary
grills – iron bars (for protection)
passed out – unconscious (probably from drinking too much alcohol)
Dealers – illegal drug dealers

malevolent
quake
head bowed
trained . . . on
procrastination

Chapter 15 (pages 189-200)
as such
beatific
Muni
hospice
nondescript
grills
passed out
Dealers

You already decided . . . these are words spoken in a slang dialect. Here is the translation:
You have already decided that you are going to leave, so you can’t see anything good even if it (something good) were to hit you in the face.

You already decided . . .

scab – the body’s natural hard covering over a wound
making out – kissing for a long time
nostalgic – thinking about things in the past
behind him – in the past

You already decided . . .
scab
making out
nostalgic
behind him

ghetto – a poor area of a city
abortion – medically ending a pregnancy and ending the baby’s life

ghetto
abortion

wringing her hands – grasping her hands nervously

voodoo – a type of magic intended to make bad things happen to people

you be ending with ashes in your mouth – you’ll end up in a bad situation

trepidation – fear

reminiscing – remembering, thinking back in time

exhaust-laden – air that is heavy/thick with the fumes (exhaust) from cars

interminable – unending, slow

lavendar . . . daylilies – flowers

curt – short

frisson – thrill, fear

sweet alysum – flower

lay . . . priest – not official

twinge – a tiny amount

kept him on – kept him on the team

touchiness – very emotional, easily hurt

plummeted – sank; went down

tended to impatience – was impatient (his personality leaned toward impatience)
took it hard – things upset him very much; he took things personally

soup kitchens – places that give out free food to homeless people

deployment – military term meaning “to be sent to”
apathetically – without concern or much thought

expiate – to make up for; make amends

metta – love, goodwill

buoyed – uplifted

child trafficking – selling children as slaves

scrawny – small, skinny

frock – a simple dress

background check – looking for a person’s history of arrests and other police involvement. This is very common for many professions.
pored over – look at intensely

scrawlings – writing, but not very neat
deciphered – translated, helped Cameron determine the meaning of

a mind of her own – is an independent thinker

P.T. class – gym (exercise) In the U.S., it’s usually P.E. class, for Physical Education

leave from work – time off from work

stay on – continue living there; stay at the same place

Chapter 16 (pages 201-220)
aftershock – smaller earthquakes following a major earthquake
doorjambs – the wooden trim around a door (the top and sides)
duck under – go under, dip her head in order to go under Mr. P’s arm

peering – looking

fetal position – laying on his side with his knees close to his chest (like a baby/fetus inside its mother)

reproachless – lacking disapproval

Mnemosyne – Greek goddess of memory

wheezing – difficult breathing, lots of congestion

blanched – pale

placidous – words used so often they lose their meaning

stubbled – refers to the stiff hairs that grow on a man’s face if he doesn’t shave. This is called “stubble.”

flushed – pink (flush with blood)

prop – sit, in a supported way
filial perfidies – her untrustworthiness (perfidies) as a daughter (filial)

cringed – bend one’s head or body in fear; fearful body language

elation – extreme happiness

cupped their hands – to bend the hands into the shape of a cup

crangings – harsh, loud noises

craning – stretching his neck out as far as he can (to see better or farther)

figure out – understand

perish – die

gingerly – carefully

give me a hand – help me

retch – vomit, or make a vomiting noise

heaves – big, deep breaths

Cameron’s decline – his worsening health

fetch – get

rallied – encouraged

makeshift – not real, a temporary substitute for something

Stygian chorus – choir (no idea what Stygian is)

sobbed – cried

cosmic joke – a joke played by the universe or fate

desultory – unfocused, without thought

conjunction – magic

perk them up – make them happier

tyrannical – cruel, oppressive

strike out – move out, begin

brag – boast, be proud of

took my absence hard – it was very hard for her

made-from-scratch – homemade

dissolve into tears – start crying

admonished – told her in a disapproving way

pull herself together – get her emotions under control

monosyllabic – one syllable (like “yes” and “no”)

prospective – future

remonstrated – to protest forcefully

suavity – his ability to be suave (charming)

foliage – plants

innocuous – innocent

settled down – gotten used to, become comfortable in

queries – questions

gerund – choice of words (pronounced jer-und)

skim – move quickly over the top of something, not too deep

metaphysical – dealing with big life questions

rhetorical – a questions that answers itself (is not intended to be answered)

the blow – the pain (like a physical blow or hit to her body)

depth down – deep inside her (heart or mind)

eying – looking at

decadent – full of luxury

ennui – French for boredom or lack of excitement

patrician – nobleman

kickboxing – an exercise class

fortified – strengthened

termed seedy – called low-class (maybe even dangerous)

exorcise – remove

waif-thin – very, very thin

leotard – the stretchy fabric clothing worn by gymnasts
gamine – mischievous or boyish
regaled – entertained me with
treacheries – problems
on the verge of – about to, almost going to do something
frenetic – fast and energetic
dumped – broke up with (is no longer dating)
SOB – Son Of A Bitch (a swear word/term)
drenched – wet
set me up with – get me, provide me with
No shit! – No way! I can’t believe it!
hit the road – leave, go
illicit – forbidden
akin – like
well-executed – well-done
dozed off – slept
carry-on suitcase – a small suitcase that can be carried onto an airplane with the passenger
pang – strong feeling, usually sad or negative
batik – a fabric art form
small bills – currency that is small in amount (like 1’s, 5’s, 10’s, and 20’s, but not 100’s)
glove compartment – in a car, it’s the small cabinet in front of the passenger seat (most people keep maps and the car’s manual in there)
ramshackle – run down
mimosa – tree
dozing – sleeping
scoured – looked very hard for
dab – very small amount
stoic-impatience – enduring his impatience without showing his feelings
rapping – knocking
berated – criticized
miser – a person who doesn’t like to spend (or give) money
spring for – pay for
glinted – reflected, shone
fetch – get
necks of two bottles – the long narrow part of a bottle just below the opening
Styrofoam – a type of plastic used often for cups and carry out containers
red light – a traffic light
duffel bag – fabric suitcase-like bag
punk hair – spiked, purple, common on teenagers
pet – wore
emaciated – thin, under-nourished
complicity – cooperation, working together
dumped – left, abandoned
slit – cut (as with a sharp knife)
honking – making angry noises with their car horns
seven and sevens – an alcoholic drink consisting of 7-Up and Seagram’s 7 whiskey
buzz – a feeling of intoxication or drunkenness (from the alcohol)
intermittent – stopping and starting, discontinuous
“Toto, I don’t think . . .” – a reference to The Wizard of Oz
Cheetos – a chip-like snack
Seagrams – a brand of whiskey
carnal – sexual
gash – cut
weld – glue, join
use the facilities – go to the bathroom
joints – marijuana
drags – a deep inhalation (like with a cigarette)
pulsating – beating in a rhythm, sparkling
kaleidoscope – like a small telescope, with colored glass or cut glass at one end which makes everything look very colorful, but unrecognizable
effing – f-ing (pronounced “effing”)
aurora borealis – green and pink lights seen in the night sky of the north
sublimely plausible – awesomely possible
amorous – in a loving mood
dew – a wetness on the ground caused by the cool temperatures of nighttime
askew – not straight
dispatched – sent
tackle – fight
remonstrance – protest
equanimitity – peace, calm
demeanor – attitude
ado – wait (pronounced ah-doo)
surmised – figured out, understood
brink – edge, like on a cliff
lobbed – threw
oblige – honor, do what he wanted
absurdity – ridiculousness
monosyllabic – words containing only one syllable (like yes and no)
status quo – Latin for “the current conditions of life” or “the existing state of affairs"
thus – therefore
oblivious – unseeing, unaware
illicitly – immorally, wrongly
yanked – torn, ripped
oozing – seeping, leaking
indiscriminately – random, unselective, haphazard
resurrected – made new again
sandpaper – heavy paper covered in sand, used to make wood smooth
stoned – high on marijuana
smashed – high, drunk
SOBs – Sons of Bitches (a negative term for someone)
mess with my head – interfere with my thinking
screwed up – messed up, made mistakes with
surreal – unreal in a magical, mystical way