

My house has chicken legs. Two or three times a year, without warning, it stands up in the middle of the night and walks away from where we've been living. It might walk a hundred miles or it might walk a thousand, but where it lands is always the same. A lonely, bleak place at the edge of civilization.

It nestles in dark forbidden woods, rattles on wind-swept icy tundra, and hides in crumbling ruins at the far edge of cities. At this moment, it's perched on a rocky ledge high in some barren mountains. We've been here two weeks and I still haven't seen anyone living. Dead people, I've seen plenty of those of course. They come to visit Baba and she guides them through The Gate. But the real, live, living people, they all stay in the town and villages far below us.

Maybe if it was summer, a few of them would wander up here, to picnic and look at the view. They might smile and say hello. Someone my own age might visit—maybe a whole group of children. They might stop near the stream and splash in the water to cool off. Perhaps they would invite me to join them.

“How's the fence coming?” Baba calls through the open window, pulling me from my daydream.

Read the extract of chapter one, 'Prologue.'

4) Explain what the narrator's house does a few times a year.

It stands up and walks away in the middle of the night

5) What is the same about where the house ends up?

It is a lonely, bleak place at the edge of civilisation

6) Infer how the character might feel when their house moves again. Explain your answer.

They feel unsettled and lost. They may also feel frightened as they don't know where they might end up.

7) Find evidence that the narrator is desperate to have company.

The narrator talks a lot about seeing other people. They talk about their hope of seeing other children of the same edge and gets in day dreaming thinking about it.

Grammar focus

8) Find and copy a modal verb in the text.

Might

9) Find an adverbial phrase in the text.

At this moment