

KS3 English Language Reading – Ghosts

Moving House



The following is an extract from the novel **Maya's Journey** by Ellis Leadbetter.

Maya awoke with a start, to discover that Aunt Trix had stopped the car. Rubbing sleep from her eyes, she reached for Brown Bear and pushed his soft fur against her face. Then, she looked out of the window to see a high, overgrown hedge, with a narrow opening blocked by a rusty iron gate. "We're here!" announced her aunt.

In front of them, the removal van had already arrived, and the men were lowering the back door to form a ramp. Maya could see their boxes of possessions, neatly labelled, stuffed between sofas and the kitchen table and Uncle Bert's grandfather clock. Everything looked higgledy-piggledy and out of place: just like she felt.

Sighing, she waited for Aunt Trix to turn off the child-locks and let her out of the car, then she followed her through the rusty gate, which predictably squeaked on its hinges as it swung open. In front of them was a cobbled path, leading up to the front door of a thatched cottage. Once, it would have been called picturesque with its beamed structure and crooked chimney. A spiky plant climbed the façade, twirling inky fingers around the window frames. In spring, the plant probably burst into beautiful blooms. Now, under the lowering September sky, the whole building looked forbidding.

Clutching Brown Bear, Maya gazed up at the first-floor windows, three of them neatly lined up along the front of the house. Which would be her bedroom? Aunt Trix had said there were



only two available, with a bathroom in between that “needed some TLC”. Mrs Watkins at school always said her work needed “TLC” when it was really bad. She sighed again.

As she stared at the house, something caught the corner of her eye. There, in the furthest window, was a figure, staring down at her. It was standing to the side of the window, as if hiding. As she watched, the figure stepped back into shadow, and was lost from view.

“Someone’s inside,” she announced, tugging on Aunt Trix’s coat.

“Don’t be silly, dear,” Aunt Trix removed her hand carefully from the fabric and patted it gently, “No-one’s lived here in years.”

“I saw them,” Maya insisted, pointing up to the window, “There. I saw them there.”

“Ah!” Aunt Trix smiled down at her, squeezing her hand in reassurance. “That’s your bedroom.” Maya felt a rush of dread sweep over her.

