

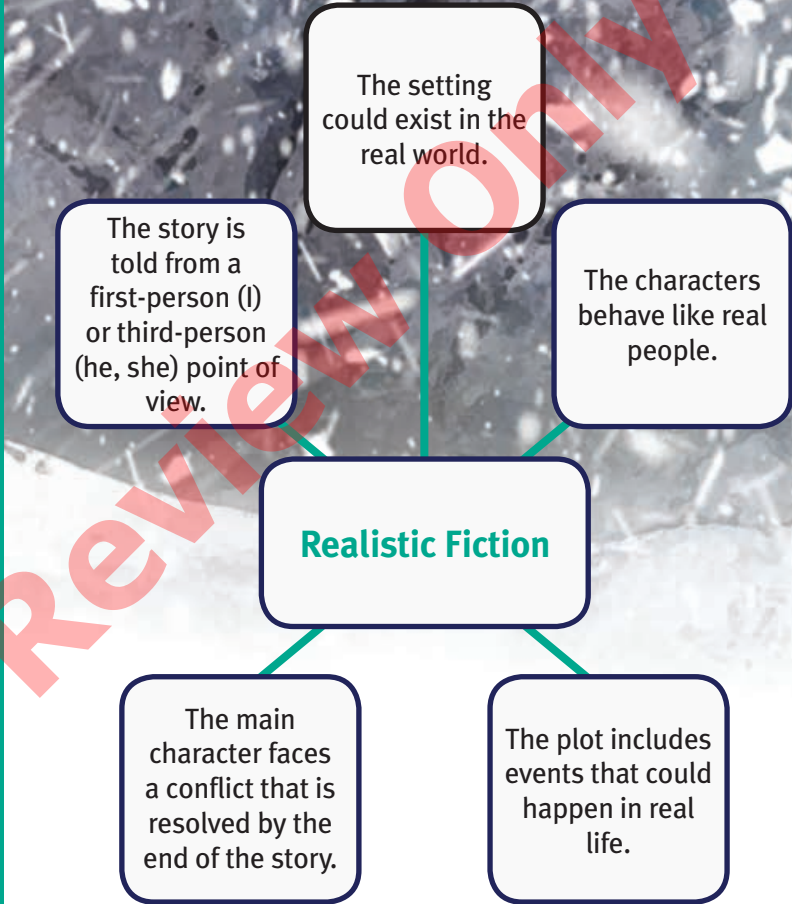
WANDERER AND THE ICE AGE



Level	T/40
Lexile®	650L

Realistic Fiction

Look for the genre features noted below as you read this book. Use the features to help you understand the text.



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The Ice Is Coming

As night fell on the hillside, the men gathered around a fire. The women and children had found shelter in small caves nearby. The **clan** had followed a **herd** of elk up into these hills. They had set up a camp, living off the elk and plants nearby.

Now, after a long day of hunting and gathering, the men of the clan sat by the fire. They did not know that Wanderer was still awake. The young boy crouched down behind a rock, listening to the men of the clan. A gust of wind came up the hillside. Wanderer could see the men's tired faces in the light of the fire.

"It's bitter cold," a clan member mumbled as he sat down by the crackling fire. "The cold seems to last longer."

"What has changed?" asked one clan member, as he grabbed a fur wrap.

"I know," said the Elder, as he looked up at the frosty night sky and sighed. The Elder was the oldest and wisest member of the clan.

Then the Elder walked closer to the fire and put his hands over it, as if he were gathering strength and wisdom from the flames.

He spoke: "The land and water and air all work together to create the weather. Yet each day grows colder than the last. The ice ... it's coming. We have to prepare."

The Elder felt a shiver down his spine as he spoke. He was so cold and so fearful of the challenges he and his clan members might face.

"What do you mean, 'We have to prepare?'" a clan member asked. "How do you know the ice is coming?"



“I had a dream not long ago, and in it I saw a **glacier**—a huge ice sheet moving across the land. Animals were leaving the area to get to a warmer place. It was their **instinct** to leave. After my dream, I noticed fewer elk. I saw fewer birds and hares. The animals are leaving. We need to follow them to survive.”

The men thought about the Elder’s words. They thought about how their survival depended upon the land and the animals. The days were growing colder, and this affected them all.

“What should we do?” the clan members asked. They, like the Elder, were fearful that if they did not make a decision soon, they would **perish**—death would be imminent.

“In which direction will we go?” asked one man.

The Elder stood up and pointed south, without hesitation. The Elder always guided the group to their next camp. The **nomadic** clan relied on him as a leader and as a wise man. In the past, when they went from place to place in search of food, it was the Elder who told them when and where they should go.

A clan member stood up and looked around at the other men. He asked, “How big will the ice sheet be? Will it cover our camp?”

No one knew how far-reaching the ice would be.



“It will be much larger—larger than you can imagine, which is why we need to move south, where it is warmer. We might be walking for a long time,” responded the Elder.

“How will we know when we’ve arrived in the new place where we’ll live?” asked another clan member.

“We will do what we always do when we wander from place to place—we will look around at the land and stay a few days at one spot to see what the environment is like,” the Elder explained.

“We will stop **migrating** when the animals cease to migrate, since they are our life source and we cannot survive without them.”

The other clan members nodded their heads in agreement. They understood this routine because it was their way of life.

“Yet,” said the Elder, “we will want to make sure it is warmer there, and that there are animals and land and water for us to use to fulfill our needs. We must also make sure that it is a safe place.

“Let’s get some sleep now,” added the Elder, “as we want to get an early start tomorrow morning. We will start our journey after the sun rises.”

The men obeyed the words of the Elder and quickly moved away from the fire. Even though they were used to moving often, they felt more urgency this time. Harsh weather and a lack of food put their clan in danger.

“I wonder how long it will take for us to find warmth?” said one clan member to another as they quietly slipped into the caves.

No one knew, not even the Elder.

As the men cleared, Wanderer peeked out from his hiding place. He heard every word of their conversation. And he was angry. He knew that his clan would leave tomorrow. But he loved these hills and caves and he was determined to stay.



Where Is Wanderer?

“Wan, Wan? Where are you?” Wanderer’s mother said under her breath as she searched the caves and surrounding camp, “Where did that adventurous boy go?”

Wanderer’s mother grabbed an extra animal hide to cover herself. The sun was not up yet. She shivered for a moment but then was revived by the added warmth. She headed back outside to look behind rocks, tree trunks, and other hiding places where she normally could find her youngest son. Something caught her eye on the ground. It was Wanderer’s necklace, made of shells. She picked it up and smelled it. It still smelled like him, so she was hopeful that he hadn’t wandered too far away from home.

Where could he be this time? she asked herself. *We need to leave.*

“Did you find him, Mother?” asked her daughter. “Do you want me to go with you to the woods to search for him?”

“Thank you, but I’ll go by myself,” she responded.





Wanderer's mother looked behind big rocks, by the nearly frozen stream, and inside large, fallen tree trunks.

Why did I give him this name? she scolded herself.

Meanwhile, the other members of the clan were getting ready to leave the camp. They had gathered their stone spears and tools they had made, and any food they had stored. Some of the young children were running around with excitement. There was an energy in the air for the big move—and yet there was also concern. A pressing need to leave soon hovered over the camp, and every clan member had to be accounted for.

Determined to stay behind, Wanderer jumped from rock to rock and log to log as he made his way down a frozen stream in the woods. He shivered as the cold air nipped his cheeks. *It is much colder than I thought,* he said to himself.