

LO: To infer the deeper meaning of the illustrations

The regimented office cubicles depicted mirror the regimented high rise buildings in cities. They are also suggestive of a 'maze' in which a person may be lost and isolated. The walls are just high enough to obscure your fellow co-worker or neighbour from your eyes.

What feelings do these cubicles arouse in the reader?

I  
do



Thinking together- Discuss



Cicada works extremely hard yet receives no recognition and his working and living conditions are appalling. His dismissal is equally so. The image in which he is cleaning his desk prior to leaving his job, with his employer standing with crossed arms behind him, is physically chilling. This sort of exploitation is common even in wealthy companies. Tan invites questions rather than passing judgment.

**I  
do**

Why would Cicada endure such a workplace? Why would his employers treat him so badly?



Thinking together- Discuss

Cicada may seem to be the loneliest worker in the world, but there are many workers and people in other situations who are just like him. The images and the words in the book suggest immense isolation and loneliness, and also cicada's unspoken desire to fit in or belong.

Does Cicada finally belong?



I  
do

Thinking together- Discuss

Cicada may seem to be the loneliest worker in the world, but there are many



Use the following question and write a written response.

we  
do

Why are people so ready to reject those who are different?

you  
do

*Why isn't the text written in first person, given that it is Cicada's story?*

*Cicada is a virtual prisoner in his workplace, but by the end of the book Cicada is free. How does he achieve that?*

*Why are people so ready to reject those who are different?*

*What has he finally decided or discovered about his colleagues and about himself?*

*What is Cicada's likely future? Is it a new life?*