

And yet even while I was exulting in my solitude I became aware of a strange lack. I wished a companion to lie near me in the starlight, silent and not moving, but ever within touch. For there is a fellowship more quiet even than solitude, and which, rightly understood, is solitude made perfect. And to live out of doors with the woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free.

As I thus lay, between content and longing, a faint noise stole towards me through the pines. I thought, at first, it was the crowing of cocks or the barking of dogs at some very distant farm; but steadily and gradually it took articulate shape in my ears, until I became aware that a passenger was going by upon the high-road in the valley, and singing loudly as he went. There was more of good-will than grace in his performance; but he trolled with ample lungs; and the sound of his voice took hold upon the hillside and set the air shaking in the leafy glens. I have heard people passing by night in sleeping cities; some of them sang; one, I remember, played loudly on the bagpipes. I have heard the rattle of a cart or carriage spring up suddenly after hours of stillness, and pass, for some minutes, within the range of my hearing as I lay abed. There is a romance about all who are abroad in the black hours, and with something of a thrill we try to guess their business. But here the romance was double: first, this glad passenger, lighted internally with wine, who sent up his voice in music through the night; and then I, on the other hand, buckled into my sack, and smoking alone in the pine-woods between four and five thousand feet towards the stars.

When I awoke again, many of the stars had disappeared; only the stronger companions of the night still burned visibly overhead; and away towards the east I saw a faint haze of light upon the horizon, such as had been the Milky Way when I was last awake. Day

was at hand. I lighted my lantern, and by its glow-worm light put on my boots and gaiters; then I broke up some bread for Modestine, filled my can at the water-tap, and lit my spirit-lamp to boil myself some chocolate. The blue darkness lay long in the glade where I had so sweetly slumbered; but soon there was a broad streak of orange melting into gold along the mountain-tops of Vivarais. A solemn glee possessed my mind at this gradual and lovely coming in of day. Nothing had altered but the light, and that, indeed, shed over all a spirit of life and of breathing peace, and moved me to a strange exhilaration.

... I strolled here and there, and up and down about the glade. While I was thus delaying, a gush of steady wind, as long as a heavy sigh, poured direct out of the quarter of the morning. It was cold, and set me sneezing ... I could see the thin distant spires of pine along the edge of the hill rock slightly to and fro against the golden east. Ten minutes after, the sunlight spread at a gallop along the hillside, scattering shadows, and the day had come completely.

I hastened to prepare my pack, and tackle the steep ascent that lay before me; but I had something on my mind ... I had been most hospitably received and punctually served in my green caravanserai. The room was airy, the water excellent. I say nothing of the tapestries or the inimitable ceiling, nor yet of the view which I commanded from the windows; but I felt I was in some one's debt for all this. And so it pleased me, in a half-laughing way, to leave pieces of money on the turf as I went along, until I had left enough for my night's lodging. I trust that they did not fall to some rich or churlish drover.

Read and answer the questions (a-f) on this page.

The number after each question shows you how much detail you should go into in your answer:

1 = a very brief answer

5 = an answer you should explain carefully, referring to details in the text to support what you write.

Questions

- a) Look at the word *stole* in the first sentence. Stevenson (the writer and narrator) could have used another word, such as 'crept' or 'came'. **Why do you think the writer used the word *stole*?** (2)
- b) What is the noise that Stevenson hears? (1)
- c) How do we know that the man is singing badly? (2)
- d) Carefully read paragraph three. (This paragraph begins, 'When I awoke again ...'.) **Describe how Stevenson is feeling in this paragraph.** Use your own words as far as possible, but do refer to words that Stevenson uses. (4)
- e) Carefully read the last paragraph. (This paragraph begins, 'I hastened to prepare my pack...') **In your own words, explain what Stevenson decides to do, and why he does it.** (3)
- f) Read back over the whole passage. **Explain the effect the night has had on Stevenson, and how the words he uses help us to understand the effect on him.** (5)