The time machine

Extract

'I drew a breath, set my teeth, gripped the starting lever with both hands, and went off with a thud. The laboratory got hazy and went dark. Mrs Watchett came in and walked, apparently without seeing me, towards the garden door. I suppose it took her a minute or so to traverse the place, but to me she seemed to shoot across the room like a rocket. I pressed the lever over to its extreme position. The night came like the turning out of a lamp, and in another moment came to-morrow. The laboratory grew faint and hazy, then fainter and ever fainter. To-morrow night came black, then day again, night again, day again, faster and faster still. An eddying murmur filled my ears, and a strange, dumb confusedness descended on my mind.

I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback* – of a helpless headlong motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, night followed day like the flapping of a black wing. The dim suggestion of the laboratory seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. I supposed the laboratory had been destroyed and I had come into the open air. I had a dim impression of scaffolding, but I was already going too fast to be conscious of any moving things. The slowest snail that ever crawled dashed by too fast for me. The twinkling succession of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then, in the intermittent darkesses, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining velocity, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous greyness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous colour like that of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch, in space; the moon a fainter fluctuating band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.' (Chapter 3)

* switchback: a rollercoaster; a zigzag railway with high ascents and descents

Wells, HG 1895, The time machine, Planet eBook
QAR: question–answer relationships

Right there

The narrator of this story:
☐ is recounting a story they heard from someone else
☐ is recounting a story from their own experience.

The main sense of movement experienced by the narrator is one of:
☐ speed
☐ slowness
☐ spinning
☐ flickering.

The celestial body that the author witnessed moving through its quarters was:
☐ a star
☐ the moon
☐ the sun.

Think and search

The best adjective to describe the feeling of the narrator in retelling this account is:
☐ peculiar
☐ painful
☐ wondrous
☐ horrible.

Author and you

The topic of the passage is time travel. If time travel were ever possible, what do you think would be some benefits for society?

On my own

Which of the following quotes from the text is a metaphor?
☐ 'night followed day like the flapping of a black wing'
☐ 'the sun hopping swiftly across the sky'
☐ 'the slowest snail that ever crawled'
☐ 'the sun became a streak of fire'