

Name _____ Date _____

Adapted from *Just David: "The Trail"**by Eleanor H. Porter*

From beneath his bed he dragged a large, dusty traveling bag, and in this he carried a little food, some clothes, and a great deal of the music scattered about the room.

David, in the doorway, stared in wonder. Gradually into his eyes crept a look never seen there before.

"Father, where are we going?" he asked at last in a shaking voice, as he came slowly into the room.

"Back, son; we're going back."

"To the village, where we get our eggs and bacon?"

"No, no, lad, not there. The other way. We go down into the valley this time."

"The valley—my valley, with the Silver Lake?"

8

"Yes, my son; and beyond—far beyond." The man spoke dreamily as if he were thinking about another place and time. He was looking at a photograph in his hand. It had slipped in among the loose sheets of music, and had not been put away with the others. It was the likeness of a beautiful woman.

For a moment David eyed him uncertainly; then he spoke.

"Daddy, who is that? Who are all these people in the pictures? You've never told me about any of them except the little round one that you wear in your pocket. Who are they?"

Instead of answering, the man turned faraway eyes on the boy and smiled sadly.

"Ah, David, lad, how they'll love you! How they will love you! But you mustn't let them spoil you, son. You must remember—remember all I've told you."

13

Once again David asked his question, but this time the man only turned back to the photograph, muttering something the boy could not understand. His voice was soft and quiet.

14

After that David did not question any more. He was too amazed, too distressed. He was worried about his father because he had never seen him like this before. With nervous haste the man was crowding things quickly into the bag and packing other things away in an old trunk. His cheeks were very red and his eyes very bright. He talked, too, almost constantly, though David could understand scarcely a word of what was said. Later, the man picked up his violin and played; and never before had David heard his father play like that. The boy's eyes filled, and his heart ached with a pain that choked—though why, David could not have told. Still later, the man dropped his violin and sank exhausted into a chair; and then David, worn and frightened with it all, crept to his bunk and fell asleep.

In the gray dawn of the morning, David awoke to a different world. His father, white-faced and gentle, was calling him to get ready for breakfast. The little room, without its decorations, was bare and cold. The bag, closed and strapped, rested on the floor by the door, together with the two violins in their cases, ready to carry.

"We must hurry, son. It's a long walk before we take the cars."

"The cars—the real cars? Do we go in those?" David was fully awake now.

"Yes."

"And is that all we're to carry?"

"Yes. Hurry, son."

"But we come back—sometime?"

There was no answer.

"Father, we're coming back—sometime?" David's voice was demanding now.

The man stooped and tightened a strap that was already quite tight enough. Then he laughed lightly.

"Why, of course you're coming back sometime, David. Only think of all these things we're leaving!"

When the last dish was put away, the last garment adjusted, and the last look given to the little room, the travelers picked up the bag and the violins and went out into the sweet freshness of the morning. As he fastened the door, the man sighed; but David did not notice this. His face was turned toward the east—always David looked toward the sun.

27

“Daddy, let’s not go, after all! Let’s stay here,” he cried eagerly in a wild, longing voice, drinking in the beauty of the morning.

“We must go, David. Come, son.” And the man led the way across the green slope to the west.

- 1 What is the meaning of *dreamily* in paragraph 8?
 - A thoughtfully
 - B hurriedly
 - C playfully
 - D carelessly

- 2 What is the meaning of *muttering* in paragraph 13?
 - A mumbling
 - B smiling
 - C yelling
 - D crying

3 What is the meaning of *distressed* in paragraph 14?

- A weak
- B upset
- C selfish
- D serious

4 What is the meaning of the word *crowding* in paragraph 14?

- A taking
- B buying
- C stuffing
- D dropping

5 Which word could replace the word *eagerly* in paragraph 27?

- A angrily
- B excitedly
- C gently
- D sadly