

Summary Writing- 10

Maria's deep fascination with the northern lights, or aurora borealis, stemmed from her childhood when she would marvel at photographs depicting the vibrant, mystical lights dancing across the sky. Even at a young age, she was captivated by the beauty and mystery of this natural phenomenon. Her curiosity led her to explore scientific books that detailed the causes of the northern lights—how charged particles from the Sun's solar wind collide with gases in the Earth's upper atmosphere, producing brilliant veils of color. This blend of visual magic and scientific wonder rooted a lifelong obsession in her mind.

Driven by this passion, Maria made the bold decision to travel to the Arctic Circle, where sightings of the aurora are more common. But getting there was no small feat. The journey was grueling—from multiple long-haul flights to weather-delayed transfers, followed by hours in a cramped shuttle navigating icy, snow-covered roads through remote terrain. She arrived physically drained, her luggage half-soaked with melted snow and her phone barely functioning due to the cold. The isolation was sobering—no bustling streets, no city lights—only vast expanses of snow and silence.

Her accommodation was modest and barely insulated against the sub-zero temperatures. Nights were particularly harsh. Wrapped in thermal layers, boots, gloves, and a thick parka, Maria ventured out into the bone-chilling cold each night, joining groups of hopeful sky-watchers. They stood in the open tundra for hours, huddled together for warmth, their breath forming misty clouds as they stared skyward. For two consecutive nights, they were met only with brief, ghostlike glimmers—teasing wisps that vanished in seconds, leaving behind sighs of disappointment and frost-nipped fingers.

But on the third night, something changed. A hushed murmur rippled through the group as a faint glow emerged on the northern horizon. Maria's breath caught. Slowly, the sky awakened. Bands of emerald green unfurled above them, twisting and swirling with fluid grace, like dancers draped in silk. The colors deepened—rich jades and forest greens rippled across the heavens in silent choreography. Time seemed to pause as the display intensified, each moment more breathtaking than the last.

Despite all the science she had read, Maria was completely unprepared for the emotional magnitude of the experience. Photographs and theories had only scratched the surface. The lights felt alive, responding to some ancient rhythm beyond human comprehension. Yet even in her awe, she didn't attribute the phenomenon to mysticism or the supernatural. For her, the real wonder lay in the fact that natural processes—electromagnetic forces, solar flares, atoms colliding—could create something so profoundly moving.

A child beside her whispered, "Look Dad, it's like the sky is dancing!" Maria smiled. That unfiltered, poetic observation captured the moment more truthfully than any scientific lecture. It wasn't that science failed to explain it—it's that the explanation didn't diminish the beauty. If anything, understanding how such phenomena occurred only deepened her respect for the universe's complexity.

As the aurora dimmed and the stars reclaimed the sky, Maria trudged back to her lodging—exhausted, frozen to the bone, yet filled with quiet joy. The experience had fulfilled a childhood dream but also ignited something deeper: not just a sense of wonder, but a renewed thirst for understanding. Though science had given her the "how," the lights gave her a reason to keep asking "why." And in that balance—between knowledge and wonder—lay the true magic of the northern lights.

(a) Summarise the reasons for Maria's fascination with the northern lights and her experiences trying to witness them, as described in the passage.

(b) Interviewer's question:

Maria, for someone who isn't particularly fascinated by the northern lights or doesn't have a scientific or emotional attachment to them, would you still recommend making the journey to see them? Is it truly worth it as a vacation experience?

Maria's Answer: