



## Fifty Shades of Black

Once upon a time, when you were allowed to descend into the *Enclos* during an eruption, and when I could be up all night without **suffering** for a week afterwards, I went to the volcano.

This wasn't just any old trip to the volcano however, it was a very special trip. An eruption was taking place, and a group of us had **packed up the car** with clothes for all extremes of weather, hiking shoes, food, water, and cameras for a late night expedition. Midnight found us excitedly driving along the **bumpy route forestière** ... only to reach the car park and be met with a wall of thick cloud.

We were **bitterly** disappointed, but as we were also starting **to feel a bit peckish** we parked in an almost empty car park, and **tucked into** some of the **snacks** we'd brought with us. A while later when we stepped out of the car, we realised the clouds had miraculously disappeared, so we got ourselves ready and **headed along** the path and down into the *Enclos*.

Now, it wasn't the first time I'd visited the volcano during an eruption, nor the first time I'd hiked at night. I can't remember what month it was, but although we were warm while walking, we rapidly felt frozen as soon as we stopped for a drink of water. It was during one of these **thirst-quenching** breaks that I remember looking back towards the centre of the island, and what I saw has stayed **engraved** on my memory ever since, even though it only lasted a few instants.

There was a **full moon** that night and no clouds left. All of Reunion's mountains were perfectly silhouetted against the **starlit** sky, in different **shades** of black and grey. There was no artificial light anywhere, and I felt as if I was one of the first people **to set foot** on the island and discover its treasures. Behind me I could also hear (and smell) the **'whoosh'** of the lava **spouts** of the on-going eruption, which added to the magical atmosphere.

The cold forced us to carry on walking, but we knew from the red-**tinged** sky ahead that a different spectacle awaited us further on. There, we settled down to watch the eruption: far enough away to be safe, but close enough to kept warm. We sat for several hours, until **day had broken**, watching the amazing forces of nature. Together with what we had **witnessed** earlier, we formed memories that I am convinced will last me a lifetime.





## Vocabulary

once upon a time – il était une fois

to suffer – (ici) payer le prix

pack up the car – remplir la voiture

bumpy - cahoteux

bitterly – (ici) profondément

to feel peckish – avoir un petit creux

to tuck into – attaquer (quelque chose à manger)

snacks – en-cas

to head along – se diriger

thirst-quenching – désaltérant

engraved – gravé

full moon – pleine lune

starlit – étoilé

shades – nuances

to set foot – mettre les pieds

'whoosh' – souffle (bruit)

spouts – jets

tinged – teinté

day break – lever du jour

to witness – observer