

The Scholar-Gipsy Summary

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Stanza 1 - Returning to the Quest: At the beginning of the poem, the poet imagines a scene. He speaks, in his imagination, to a shepherd—asking him to return to his daily duties: untie the animals and feed them. But when everything becomes silent—when men and dogs have gone to sleep and only the white sheep are seen walking on the grass in the moonlight—then he should come back again, and resume the search for truth and knowledge. This "search" is symbolic of a higher spiritual quest for the meaning of life.

Stanza 2 - Sitting Alone on a Summer Noon: In this stanza, the poet sits in a corner of a field, where earlier a haymaker was working. The haymaker has left behind his shirt, basket, and water pot. In the morning, he was binding sheaves under the sun, and at noon, he returned to rest there. The poet chooses to sit at that very spot. He hears the distant bleating of sheep and the sound of harvesters at work. The living sounds and atmosphere of a summer day surround him.

Stanza 3 - The Peaceful Summer Scene: In this stanza, the poet says he is sitting at the corner of a cornfield. He plans to stay there until sunset. Among the corn stalks, red poppies are visible. At the base of the plants, small pink flowers are twined. Tiny petals fall from trees in the breeze. These falling flowers create shade that protects the poet from the heat. From there, he can see the towers of Oxford in the distance.

Stanza 4 - The Story of the Oxford Student: In this stanza, the poet mentions that beside him, in the grass, lies Glanvill's book. He wishes to reread that old story once more. The story is about a poor Oxford student. He was very clever and intelligent. Despite his efforts, he couldn't get a good job. One summer morning, he abandoned everything and went to live the life of a gypsy. People thought he had failed in life. But he never returned to Oxford or to his friends again.

Stanza 5 - The Secret Wisdom of the Gypsies: Years later, two old classmates happened to see that student on a country road. They asked how he was and what he was doing. The student replied that the gypsies possess a special power—the ability to influence people's minds. They can make people think as they wish. The student says, "I am now learning this secret skill. Once I've fully learned it, I will share it with others." However, he adds that such learning requires divine moments.

Stanza 6 - Disappearance after Despair: After that encounter, he was never seen again. However, some people say they have seen him from time to time. He used to remain silent, wearing an old-fashioned cap and a grey cloak. He was sometimes spotted in the springtime, out in the fields, or at lonely inns. Farmers have said they saw him sitting near a woodland fire.

Stanza 7 - Traces Left for Travelers: The poet imagines that perhaps the scholar is known to shepherds and travelers. The boys search for him among the cornfields. The poet himself tries to find him by sitting near the riverbank. On hot summer days, he rests in grassy meadows, gazing at the hills. He wonders if the scholar lives hidden in some secret place in those hills.

Stanza 8 - Sighting by the Ferry: The poet says that the scholar must love quiet places. He has been seen at the Oxford ferry during summer nights, as the ferry crosses the river. He touches the cold river water with his hand. It feels like he sits silently in a dreamlike state.

Stanza 9 - Flowers for the Mothers: The poet says that the scholar brings flowers to mothers. Some women have seen him during village dances. He walks silently across the fields, picking flowers—flowers of many colours. But no one dares to speak to him.

Stanza 10 - By the Godstow Bridge: During summer, the Scholar-Gipsy has been seen near Godstow Bridge. He sits quietly by the riverbank, dressed in strange clothes. People see him from the grassy fields by the river. His eyes look weary and thoughtful. As people return from bathing, he quietly disappears.

Stanza 11 - On the Hills of Cumner: The Scholar-Gipsy has been seen near a lonely cottage on the hills of Cumner. There, a girl mends clothes inside the house. He is seen standing by the gate, watching the harvest work. Local boys wander around the hill and catch glimpses of him. Like a shadow, he slowly fades away among the grass.

Stanza 12 - In Bagley Wood: In autumn, he has been seen near Bagley Wood. Near the church, gypsies are changing into their garments. Blackbirds do not fear him. He quietly twirls a dried branch in his hand with deep focus. It seems he is waiting for a sign or blessing from the skies.

Stanza 13 - A Winter Sighting: In winter, people have seen him walking along a snow-covered path. He was crossing a wooden bridge, wrapped in warm clothing. He gazed toward the cold hills of Hinksey. Then he quietly retreated somewhere to rest in secret.

Stanza 14 - A Story from History: His story began in Oxford two hundred years ago. Glanvill recorded it in his book. The scholar left his studies to join the gypsies. He died long ago and

now lies buried peacefully in a quiet village graveyard.

Stanza 15 - An Immortal Life: The poet believes that the scholar never truly died. His life had a single clear purpose. Unlike ordinary people, he didn't grow old or weak. His energy never faded. He still lives today—alive in our memory and imagination.

Stanza 16 - The Journey of Life: People become weak because they constantly change. Life wears us down through many struggles. We get tired and eventually give up. But the Scholar-Gipsy did not tire. He remained purposeful and strong.

Stanza 17 - Hope in a Different Life: He stayed away from the world and preserved his strength. His energy was not wasted on worldly distractions. He did not suffer from fatigue or doubt. While we run in many directions in life, he waits—with hope.

Stanza 18 - Waiting for the Heavenly Flash: You wait for the flash of fire from heaven. And what about us? We are filled with half-belief—our faith is not firm. We do not feel deeply or decide clearly. Our plans rarely succeed. Every year brings new hope, only to break it. We live in uncertainty, and what we have today, we lose tomorrow. Oh! Aren't we too waiting for that same flash, like you?

Stanza 19 - The Sadness and Pain of the Wise: We wait, but that flash never comes. So we suffer. Even the wisest among us falls into sorrow. He speaks of his pain to others. He describes how his hopes have faded.

Stanza 20 - Patience Filled with Sorrow: Ordinary people also suffer and wish their dreams would end. They give up hope for happiness. They stay patient, but it is a patience filled with sadness. We have no one like you to give us hope. You move forward in fearless joy.

Stanza 21 - Seeking Refuge in Solitude: You were born at a time when life was beautiful. Life was full of joy, like a sparkling river. But now, modern life is filled with rush, confusion, and exhaustion. That's why you are afraid to mix with us. Go deeper into the shadows of the trees. Just as Dido told her false friend to vanish, you too must stay away from us. Preserve your solitude.

Stanza 22 - Eternal Hope in Nature: You still hold on to hope. At night, you move lightly through the trees glowing in the moonlight. You walk quietly by the edges of the forest. No one follows you. You listen to the songs of the birds and enjoy the company of nature.

Stanza 23 - Stay Away from Our Path: Here, the poet shows some differences between the Scholar-Gipsy and the Victorian era. He tells the scholar not to follow their path and stay far from their restlessness. Their mental struggles are intense—not joyful but peace-destroying. If

the scholar is drawn into their troubled lives, he will lose his hope and strength. His clear purpose will fade. Then his joyful youth will end, and like them, he too will grow old and die. In the end, the poet pleads that the Scholar-Gipsy should stay away from the people of the Victorian age. They are infected by the disease of "modernity"—a sickness that drains people from within.

Stanza 24 - A Warning from the Sea: An ancient merchant was cautious while sailing the sea. At sunrise, he saw a ship filled with salted fish, grapes, and other fruits. He knew they were newcomers, entering his territory. So, he changed his ship's direction to protect himself.

Stanza 25 - The Struggle at Sea: The merchant sails through the day and night, battling the sea. He had sailed toward Sicily through a storm. At last, he reached the currents of the Atlantic Ocean. There, another group of merchants arrived. They unpacked their goods and took a rest.