

How does Stevenson use language to evoke a powerful setting in this extract?

Stevenson uses similes to evoke a powerful setting in this extract. For example, he describes how the shop fronts down a side street look “like rows of smiling saleswomen”. This has the effect of making the street sound very inviting and implies that the locals are good at their trade. The reader could also infer from this that the shop fronts stand neat and tall, suggesting that the traders take great pride in their businesses. Stevenson also uses the noun “coquetry” to hint at a flirtatiousness in the sellers, provoking the image of a bustling, attractive market in the reader.

Stevenson also uses the simile “like a fire in a forest” to highlight how the market stands out. It could also suggest that the “thriving trade” of the market was spreading rapidly through London, much like a forest fire. “Fire” could also suggest a warm and welcoming atmosphere to the market, much like its “air of invitation”. Stevenson also describes how it “shone out in contrast to its dingy neighbourhood”. The reader could infer from this that the market was like a beacon of hope to the inhabitants who were “emulously hoping to do better still”.

Stevenson also uses imperative verbs to evoke a powerful setting. For example, “a certain sinister block of building thrust forward... on the street”. The verb “thrust” suggests that it was forced and didn’t belong in the street, whilst the consonant phrase “block of building” makes the building sound completely emotionless - like it’s unloved and neglected. It could also be used to suggest that its presence was looming and hung over the street to try and drive people away. “Sinister” implies that the house was hiding something and that its appearance was forbidding - this contrasts the inviting image of the neighbourhood which was largely shaped by the market.

Stevenson also describes how the door of the house “was equipped with neither bell nor knocker”. The reader could infer from this that the inhabitant of the house doesn’t want to be disturbed or perhaps is concealing something (which might make it seem rather “sinister”). It could also imply that visitors are not welcome or expected - the complete opposite of the market portrayed earlier on.