

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Thinking about the Poem

I.

Question 1. Where does the traveler find himself? What problem does he face?

Answer: The traveler finds himself at a point in the woods where two roads diverge. The problem is that he cannot travel both the roads and thus he has to choose one between them.

Question 2. Discuss what these phrases mean to you.

- (i) a yellow wood
- (ii) it was grassy and wanted wear
- (iii) the passing there
- (iv) leaves no step had trodden black
- (v) how way leads on to way

Answer:

- (i) The phrase “a yellow wood” indicates a forest during the autumn season.
- (ii) The phrase “it was grassy and wanted wear” means that the road was full of grassy as it has been less traveled. It wanted people to walk on it so that it can wear out.
- (iii) The phrase “the passing there” refers to walking on that road.
- (iv) “Leaves no step had trodden black” indicates that the fallen leaves had not been crushed under the feet of the travelers.
- (v) The phrase “how way leads on to way” means that one road leads to another. So once the poet has made a choice between the two roads, he wonders if he will ever be able to come on the same divergence and choose the other one.

Question 3. Is there any difference between the two roads as the poet describes them:

- (i) in stanzas two and three?
- (ii) in the last two lines of the poem?

Answer:

(i) No, there is no difference between the two roads as the poet describes them in stanzas two and three as he says “the passing there had worn them really about the same” and that “equally lay in leaves no step had trodden black...”

(ii) In the last two lines of the poem, the poet indicates a difference between the two roads as he says that he took the road that was less travelled by and that has made a huge difference in his journey.

Question 4. What do you think the last two lines of the poem mean? (Looking back, does the poet regret his choice or accept it?)

Answer: The last two lines of the poem talk about taking a decision and accepting its consequences—good or bad. The poet chose the road that was less travelled by, which indicates he took a decision that people would not take generally.

He says in the last line of the poem that his choice of taking the road less travelled by has made all the difference. He does not seem to regret his choice.

II.

Question 1. Have you ever had to make a difficult choice (or do you think you will have difficult choices to make)? How will you make the choice (for what reasons)?

Answer: We all make choices on a daily basis. But I did not have to make a difficult choice till date. I will have to face challenges in the years to come as I grow up. Then, I will have to make difficult choices. I will have to choose my profession, my area of interest, etc. I think when such a situation will come, I will not just follow the herd. I will think it through and just like the poet, if required, I will take up the unexplored paths.

Question 2. After you have made a choice do you always think about what might have been, or do you accept the reality?

Answer: There is no point in regretting or thinking about what might have been. Such thoughts will always keep us in the hold of past and never let us see the benefits of the choices we made. Accepting the reality is the best way to overcome any situation.