

THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS, Rudyard Kipling

WORD MEANING

1. Shut – close
2. Woods – forest
3. Underneath – beneath, below
4. Ease – comfortable
5. Steadily – continuously
6. Coppice – an area from where plants, bush, grass is cut quite often as firewood
7. Heath – an area where small plants grow/ open uncultivated land, usually covered with grass.
8. Anemones – small plants that have white, purple, of red flowers
9. Broods – (here) breeds (sits upon egg to hatch them)
10. Badgers – s small nocturnal animal
11. Trout – a type of fish (legger mammal)
12. Swish – quick movement in the air making a soft sound
13. Cantering – if a horse is cantering, is I moving fast but at a comfortable speed/ riding at a fairly fast pace.
14. Misty solitude – lonely a foggy place
15. solitude - a lonely place.

A. READ THE POEM AND COMPLETE THE SUMMARY.

Seventy years ago the way through the forest was shut for the people. Now the weather and rains have opened it again. Now it is overgrown with wild flowers, grass and trees. Only the keepers see the bird and animal life there. Yet once in a while on a late summer evening you can hear horses beat their feet and the swish of the skirts. The riders confidently ride on the lost road as if they know it perfectly.

B. ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.

1. When did they shut the road through the woods?

Seventy years ago, they shut the road through the woods.

2. What is the condition of the road now?

The road is now shut and underneath the coppice and heath.

3. What can be heard in the woods late on a summer evening?

On a summer evening the beat of a horse's feet, the swish of a skirt can be heard in the woods.

C. READ THE LINES FROM THE POEM AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW.

1. It is underneath the coppice and heath
And the thin anemones.

a. What was under the coppice and heath?

The road was under the coppice and heath.

b. Why was it hidden there?

The road had been shut seventy years ago and now it is underneath the coppice and heath. Hence it cannot be seen.

**2. You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew.**

a. To whom do you think this horse belonged?

The horse belonged 'they', most probably the keeper of nature.

b. Why does the poet refer to it?

The poet refers to it in order to bring about the mystery of solitude and silence of nature.

c. Does its presence appear natural to you?

No, this presence does not appear to be natural. The poet reveals the presence of supernatural element.

3. As though they perfectly knew

a. Who do you think 'they' are?

'They' refers to the otter and the horses.

b. Why do you think so?

The horses and the otter must have been alive before the road was shut and therefore, they knew perfectly about it.

4. There was once a road through the woods.

a. What happened to the road that once ran through the woods?

The road that ran through the woods was shut.

b. How long ago did it exist?

It existed seventy years ago.

c. How did it disappear?

The road had been shut seventy years ago.

D. THINK AND ANSWER.

1. Describe the present state of the 'old lost road'.

The road had been shut seventy years ago. Now, it cannot be seen as it is covered by trees and plants that have grown over it. The weather and rains have added to the covering of the road. It is now fully covered by coppice and heath.

2. Why is the last line an effective end to the poem?

Since the road is completely covered with coppice and heath, there is no trace of there being any road, no one can see it. Thus, last line acts as an effective ending to the poem.

E. DISCUSS IN DETAIL.

How would you feel if old and familiar places disappear and make way for something new?

We tend to bond with places that we are familiar with and if such places disappear, then I would feel sad. The connection that one felt with that place will be lost, it will get hard to adjust to whatever new thing that is brought in place of the familiar old place.

F. Who is the author of the poem "The Way Through the Woods"?

Ans- The author of the poem is Rudyard Kipling.

About Rudyard Kipling:

Rudyard Kipling was born on December 30, 1865 at Bombay. In 1871, his family returned to England. His father and mother returned to India, but left him and his three sisters as boarders. He spent his five years in foster home where he was bullied. These experiences left him with psychological scars and a sense of betrayal. Later, he returned to India and worked for Anglo-Indian newspaper. In the earlier days of his literary career, he was popularly known as writer of short stories but later became famous as poet and a fiction writer. His famous works are 'Jungle Book', 'Soldier Three', 'Kim', etc. He received Nobel Prize for literature in 1907.

About the poem 'The Way Through The Woods':

This poem is a part of his collection of short stories 'Rewards and Fairies'. Each story in this collection was followed by a poem. This poem is well-known for supernatural elements, active life-style and paradox uses. The poem unfolds the past memories of little things that are missed by the poet presented in flashback technique to the reader. The poem reveals Rudyard Kipling's love for nature, his style of writing about nature and his relationship with the nature which is also evident in his 'Jungle Book', and 'Kim'.

Summary of 'The Way Through The Woods':

The poem begins with the mention of a road through the woods which was closed seventy years ago. The road was left undisturbed.

For so many years, the weather and the rain have undone the road (destroyed) the road. The place was looking as it was before formation of that road. But now, no one could tell if there was even a road through the woods. It is because the road has disappeared beneath the bushes and scrub of different kinds of plants. It is hidden from the human eyes. After the road was closed, trees were planted. Those trees have grown up now, and that road has become the part of the wood itself.

But now the road (which is not seen, and which is now a part of wood itself) is full of activity and life. It is occupied by the ring-dove that broods there and the burrowing badger which rolls in it playfully.

Now, if anyone goes and visits the woods in the late summer evening, he or she will come to know that there is more to the road. The night air cools above the pools that are full of trout fish, and the otter calls out to its mate. These creatures do not fear human presence because very few people enter the woods.

One could hear the trampling of a horse's hoof when the horse isn't physically present. Perhaps, it is a ghost from the past when the road was used by men on horseback. One could hear the swish of skirts moving amongst dew covered grass. From these sounds, one could tell the difference that these people move in easy walk as if they perfectly knew where the road lay, even when a living person wouldn't be able to distinguish it because it is no longer the road that was there seventy years back. The poet still feels that there is surely no road through the woods.

Questions – Answers:

1. Who can see where the old road ran?

Ans: The keeper of the woods can see where the old road ran.

2. Why is the otter not afraid of men?

Ans: The otter is not afraid of men because very few people enter the woods.

3. What are the various creatures that can be seen and heard in these woods?

Ans: Fish, otter, horse, men are the various creatures that can be seen and heard in these woods.

Explain with reference to the context:

1. 'There was once a road through the woods'.

- a) What happened to the road that once ran through the woods?

Ans: The road was closed by men seventy years ago.

- b) How long ago did it exist?

Ans: It existed seventy years ago.

- c) How has it disappeared?

Ans: Many bushes and plant has grown on the road as it was not used. Thus the road has disappeared in the shrubs.

2. It is under the coppice and health
And the thin anemones.

- a) What is under the coppice and health?

Ans: The road is under the coppice and health.

b) Why is it hidden there?

Ans: Many bushes and plant has grown on the road as it was not used. That is why it seems that the road is hidden there.

3. You will hear the beat of horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew.

a) Which is the horse that is being referred here?

Ans: The horse once upon a time on which people used to roam in the woods.

b) How and when it is present in the forest?

Ans: It is not physically present in the forest. That is one of the old memories of the poet.

c) Does its presence appear natural to you?

Ans: No, the presence of the horse doesn't appear natural to me because it is not physically present there.

4. Which lines tell you that the woods are full of life?

Ans: Following lines tell us that the woods are full of life:

- That, where the ring-dove broods,
- And the badges roll at ease,
- Where the otter whistles his mate
- On the trout-ringed pools
- You will hear the beat of the horse's feet
- And the swish of the skirt in the dew

5. What can be heard on late summer evening? What do you think causes these sounds?

Ans: The whistles of the otter can be heard on late summer evening. The otter can be seen calling his mate. Also, the horse's

feet tapping, the swish of the skirt, can be heard. Actually there is no presence of such things, it's just poet's imagination.

6. 'As though they perfectly knew' – Who do you think 'they' are? Why do you think so?

Ans: The word 'they' refer to the people who used to visit the road once upon a time. I think so because only these people can be perfectly walk on the road because they were habitual to the road.

7. Which words tell you –

a) That a woman is walking through the woods?

Ans: the swish of the skirt

b) What lives in the pool?

Ans: trout-ringed pools