

The Way Through the Woods

...that doesn't exist anymore



CONNECT

You may have shifted to a new house, taken admission in a new school or moved to a different seat in your classroom. Describe your feelings about leaving the old place and arriving at the new one.

REFLECT

Think of a place that you had visited in your childhood. In what ways has it changed since then? What is your opinion of the change?

IMAGINE

Draw a picture of one of your favourite childhood haunts and describe it.

BEFORE YOU READ



Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) was a British poet and novelist. Kipling, who was born in Bombay of British India, was hugely influenced by his homeland. His most famous work remains *The Jungle Book* (1894) that depicts stories of a boy called Mowgli raised by a pack of wolves in an Indian forest. His other major works include *Just So Stories* and *The White Man's Burden*. Kipling was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1907.

The Way Through the Woods was first published in Kipling's book *Rewards and Fairies* (1910). The poem describes a scene of a forest. There was once a path through the woods, which has now become overgrown and cannot be seen easily. Wild animals play at ease here. Yet there are faint hints of the people who had once used the path. The poem mourns the loss of all the little things that fade away and are erased from everyone's memories. It is also a reflection on the quiet beauty of nature.





READ

They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.

Weather and rain have **undone** it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the **coppice** and **heath**,
And the thin **anemones**.

undone: (here) destroyed

coppice: grove; growth of small trees

heath: open uncultivated land, usually covered
with grass

anemones: plants with white, purple or red flowers

Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-dove **broods**,
And the **badgers** roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.
Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the **trout**-ringed pools
Where the otter whistles his mate,
(They fear not men in the woods,
Because they see so few)
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily **cantering** through
The misty **solitudes**,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods...
But there is no road through the woods.



Brainstorm

What has the weather undone?

broods: (*here*) sits upon eggs to hatch them
badgers: carnivorous animals that can burrow into the ground
trout: a type of fish
cantering: riding at a fairly fast pace
solitudes: (*here*) a lonely place



CONSOLIDATE



A1. Answer these questions.

1. Who can see where the old road ran?
2. Why is the otter not afraid of men?
3. Which lines tell you that the woods are full of life?
4. What are the various creatures that can be seen and heard in these woods?
5. Which words tell you
 - a. that it is not a clear night?
 - b. that a woman is walking through the woods?
 - c. what lives in the pools?

A2. Answer these questions 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?
 - b. How long ago did it exist?
 - c. How has it disappeared?
2. *It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.*
 - a. What is under the coppice and heath?
 - b. Why is it hidden there?
 - c. How many know it is there and how do they know it?
3. *You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew...*
 - a. How and when is a horse's gallop heard in the forest?
 - b. What imagery does the phrase, 'the swish of a skirt', bring to your mind?
 - c. Do the above occurrences appear natural to you?

A3. Think and answer.

1. *They shut the road through the woods.* Who do you think are 'they'?

2. What message is the poet conveying through the poem? Can you draw a parallel between man's actions and nature's reaction to them?
3. Everything changes with time. While some changes are good, others are not. How do you deal with a change that you think is unpleasant?

A4. Learn Interesting Terms

supernatural

1. Forces, events or powers that cannot be explained by reason or the laws of science and seem to involve magic or gods are called **supernatural**.

Do you think that the poet has used elements of the supernatural in the poem? What are they? What does the poet intend to create using these?

2. Write a short note on the sound imagery used in the poem.

CREATE

B. Read this sentence.

- When the night-air cools on the **trout-ringed** pools...



World World

The words highlighted in the above sentence together form a compound adjective. They modify the noun **pools**.

Compound adjectives are adjectives that are made up of two or more words. They usually have hyphens (-).

Here are more examples.

- a **time-consuming** activity
- a **narrow-minded** person
- a **part-time** job
- a **well-known** singer
- **deep-sea** diving
- a **world-famous** site

Choose the correct option to form a compound adjective.

1. When Akriti got a promotion, she bought a brand-_____ car.
 - a. new
 - b. deeply
 - c. well
 - d. world