The Road Not Taken

by nightbaron079

Summary

One poem, eight people. How would it go?

Notes

Prompt was a poem by Robert Frost. I looked around and this came out the most, so there. So this is called a poem fic. Kinda like a song fic, but a poem.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth
She stared out the window as their teacher droned on, reading a poem for their English class. She heard a faint rustle beside her, and she looked at her desk in time to see his hand placing a note on her desk, quickly retracting his arm in case their teacher noticed. She picked up the folded piece of paper and read what he had to say.

"You're not really studying in UCLA, aren't you?"

She then looked at him at him, his head bent as he followed the passage their teacher was reading. His right hand was holding a pencil, quietly drumming a beat on the open notebook in front of him. He said she was the first person who pointed it out to him, and she smiled because he noticed that she noticed. It was them paying attention to each other—the littlest things, the tiniest details—but then it grew, became something wonderful, something that the both of them cannot control.

Instead, they nurtured it, waited and see what would happen in the end. And at the beginning it was baby steps and furtive hellos, then slow walks around the quadrangle (with friends of course, but anyone could tell that it was just him and her off in their own little world), running together in marathons, and full speed ahead towards the unknown.

Now it was their last year and graduation was looming over their heads. They all wanted to go somewhere, but since that initial burst of speed they had went back to where they had started. Now this.

What they are was already surrounded by more than fifty shades of gray—what they really were, what will they ever be, will they even be something—but it was now and what they hoped to be tomorrow that helped them go along. Smiles and knowing looks and assurance of that something was all that they needed to have. And strangely enough, it was more than enough.

He felt her looking at him and glanced up, catching her as she shook her head minutely. A smile spread across his face, and she saw him release a breath he didn't know he was holding back. Both turned their attention back to their teacher. To something familiar. Something that always felt close to home.

They listened on with lighter hearts.

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same
She remembered how they used to eat lunch together, how he would always forget to bring his bento box and how she would always let him get the extra melon pan and juice that she always brings—just in case he forgets again. And then he went ahead and transferred on the spring of their third year. Transfer to a better high school, they say. Get better grades and study harder so you can get accepted into a good university, they say. Even if he told her before anyone else, and gave a proper goodbye, the pain was still there. It was real, and it hurts. A lot.

He has always been smart. She remembered how he used to read this poem a lot to her. She would complain because it was all in English, and he would laugh and hug her at the rooftop where no one would see and no one was evil enough to tell, and she would hug back and accept what he said, because she trusted that he’ll be there as he had promised. Though they were still together, they were apart in a way that was hard to overpass.

*Why can’t he just study here with the rest of us...?*

...*Why can’t he just stay...?*

She quickly wiped away the tear that was threatening to fall onto the page of her book. Blinking back the tears that was making her vision blurry, she tried to focus on the lesson. But her mind would always go back to the what-ifs and could-have-beens. Maybe, somewhere in his new school, he was studying the same thing. Maybe, sometime when he forgets his lunch again, he would remember the melon pan and the juice and the girl that gave them to him; a girl that gave him that, and more. Maybe someday, they would eat lunch together again, eating the melon pan and juice that she always unconsciously brought—just in case.

*Maybe somehow, someday... everything can go back to near-normalcy.*

Somehow.

Someday.

Those words.

Would they ever be replaced?

*And both that morning equally lay*

*In leaves no step has trodden black*
He was dozing off again, all the English words making his brain fuzzy. His music player was in his hand, hidden under his desk and covered by the English book he had propped up on the table. He was browsing through the songs and considering how he could listen through his earphones without being caught by his teacher when his hand stilled, a particular song catching his attention.

It was a song with lyrics that he wrote, made for the first album of his group. During those times he could barely study or think straight, let alone wrote lyrics for some song. His groupmates understood what he was going through and tried to leave him alone with his thoughts as much as possible. Murmured words, awkward pats on the back, random drinks left at his table. He sits quietly and accept everything, just as with everything happening in his life for the past countless days. Counting days right now has lost meaning actually, ever since he knew that he'll not see her in class anymore.

But work was work, and sooner or later he had to do as they asked. Sooner or later he had to do his job, like what he has been doing the past few years in his life, because that was and who he currently is: an idol. And he has an image to protect. And that goes the same for her. The world they were living in allowed no mistakes; one little slip up, and eventually things would start fading bit by bit. One wrong move, and you can say goodbye to everything.

And so they had to be apart. And so she had to go away. And though he had managed to save everything on the surface... it still felt like he had lost something. Or maybe more than something...

...yes.

It was like

*everything.*

He stuffed his music player back inside the depths of his desk and moodily stared back at his English book, the words seemingly mocking him the longer he stared at it. It was like his life: everything may be in black and white, and yet
he still can't understand.

_I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by...

"What are you doing, Mi-chan?" he asked, giving her the cup of coffee that he had made for her. She smiled and accepted the drink, inhaling the sweet aroma of freshly ground coffee beans and the faint hint of chocolate that he knew she loved.

"Looking at our yearbook. A piece of paper fell when I opened it though," she said, giving the worn examination paper to him. "Remember this?"

She watched as he read through the poem and how a blush began forming on his cheeks.

"Aah, this is so embarrassing~" Kamiki said, covering his now crimson face with his hands, much to her amusement.

_Their teacher had just finished reading the poem and suddenly said that they will have a quiz about it. A few students looked alarmed at the sudden announcement, and after their teacher went out to go get the examination papers from the faculty room the room began buzzing. Shida turned in her seat to grin at Kamiki, seated at the desk behind her._

"Want to bet that I'll get a higher score than you?" she asked mischievously.

"You almost always do, so no thanks. You've been eating too much ice cream from all the bets you've won, aren't you just making yourself sick?" Kamiki replied, not even looking at Shida as he studied the poem in front of him.

"Oh come on Mikki, don't be such a kill joy. Come on, win and I'll do anything you say," Shida said.

"Or lose and buy you another ice cream again? Still not interested," Kamiki said, but then Shida saw him smile and decided to tease him a little more.
"Come on, I'll be your slave for a day if you win! And... I'll tell you the name of the person I like!" His eyebrow twitched involuntarily and he looked up, seeming like he was trying to keep a straight face.

"Why would I want to know who you like?" he asked, a challenge in his voice. She reddened slightly.

"...because you wouldn't stop asking me the last time, okay? And I don't know what else to say. Forget what I said—"

"Deal." She suddenly stopped talking in surprise. He raised an eyebrow in response. "What?"

"Wait, you're actually agreeing?" she asked incredulously.

"Why not? No turning back, okay?" he said, smiling slightly.

"If I win, you do the same thing."

"Deal."

Their teacher went back to their room and gave them the exam. It was fairly short, but that did not mean that it was easy. When it was time to submit the papers, a lot of the students were still trying to squeeze out answers. Shida smiled and stretched her arms, confident of her answers. She accepted Kamiki's paper and gave him a thumbs-up, with a face that clearly said "I did well~!" and a smug smile that made Kamiki smile softly. She was about to pass the papers forward when she noticed something scribbled at the bottom right corner of his paper.
She immediately faced his direction, not even noticing that the test papers she left at her desk was already gotten and passed on by the person seated in front of her. "Mikki... what did that mean?"

"What did it look like?" he asked back, trying to fight the blush that was rising in his cheeks.

"I... what—"

"Fulfilling my side of the bet. You're going to get a higher score anyway."

"But—"

"Look towards the front, sensei is already looking at us," he said. Shida hurriedly turned in her seat again, blushing furiously.

"Mikki was so cool back then~ My heart was beating so fast, I didn't know how to reply!" Shida said with a laugh. Kamiki groaned and covered his ears instead.

"I am not hearing this again~ and hey! I'm always cool! Do you know how nervous I was? I was scared that our teacher might see it and scold me!"

"And scold you he did," Shida said amusedly. "Are you regretting what you did, then?"

"Nah. You liked me back in the end, so it was worth it," he said, smiling at her.

"I liked you in the first place, and I was supposed to tell you but you did it first..." Shida mumbled.

"Eh? What did you say?" Kamiki asked in surprise.

"Nothing."

"Unfair! What was that all about?"

"Not telling."

"Then I'll make you tell," he said, proceeding to poke her sides. They were in the middle of a tickling match when a soft cry was heard from the next room. Shida immediately stood up and rushed to the pastel pink room. Kamiki followed soon afterwards, seeing as she picked up a crying baby and lulled it back to sleep. She slowly rocked back and forth, and in no time at all the baby was sent back to dreamland.
"Is she asleep again?" Kamiki asked, moving from the doorway to join Shida in the middle of the room.

"Shh, you'll wake her up!" Shida scolded in a whisper. He then held out his arms, and with a smile she carefully transferred the baby into them. She watched as his face relaxed, cooing at the small bundle of warmth and blankets and love that he held close to his heart.

"You don't regret it?" he suddenly, quietly asked.
"Regret what?"

"Liking me back? Marrying me? What if there's someone out there who's better for you, and I just lucked out by meeting you first?" he whispered, a doubtful edge creeping into his voice. She raised her hand and lightly hit him on the shoulder.

"Is there anything to regret? I have you... and we have her," she added fondly, gently caressing the baby's head. "Even if there was somebody out there, we're here now. I chose you, and by some lucky twist of fate you chose me too. That's all that matters to me now."

"And I love you, Ryunosuke. And we have her now. Everything that has led up to today has made all the difference, and I do not regret any part of it if I get to have the both of you by the end."

And then they embraced, and their new family of three was left to grow from there on out. And once in a while, that paper would be unfolded, their story retold time and again. About a confession, a poem, and how they struggled through a road less traveled by, and how they have become two that is now one...

...And that has made all the difference.

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