**1. THE FUN THEY HAD**

**Isaac Asimov**

Isaac Asimov (1920–1992) wrote more than four hundred books. He is best known as a

science fiction writer, most notably for his *Foundation* series and *I*, *Robot.* Asimov’s novels

and stories have had a major influence on the works of other science fiction writers.

Set Purpose

The main characters in these two stories both experience a longing for a different time or place. As you read, predict what it is these characters wish for. Are they likely to ever find it?

BEFORE READING

Build Background

Scientific Context Science fiction writers often imagine the possibilities of future technology, space travel, or exploration of other planets. Today, we know that Ray Bradbury’s visions of

settlements on Venus are not possible. However, Isaac Asimov’s vision of computerized education comes closer to today’s reality, in which students can take classes on the Internet.

Reader’s Context Have you ever wanted to live in a different time or place? What time or place would you choose?

This poem is one of the best known of Frost’s poems, and one of the most popular poems in the English language. Although most people see it as explaining the importance of being an individual and taking the road “less traveled,” most critics see it as an ironic poem that is a parody of people (specifically his friend, Edward Thomas) who regret not having taken other paths than the ones they did, when it really made no difference. People who read the

poem this way, see the last two lines as ironic. Frost himself called this poem “tricky.” The analysis on the next page looks at both interpretations, one on the right, one on the left.

The story is a work of fiction that is set in the future. Written by the famous

fiction maestro Isaac Asimov the story dates ahead to the year 2155. The writer

assumes that after about one and a half century there will be no books and

teachers and they will be replaced by computers and other gadgets. Teaching

will be more mechanical and the children will not have any fun.

“The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost

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;

Then took the other, as just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim,

. Because it was grassy and **wanted wear;(1)**

Though as for that the passing there

Had worn them really about the same,

(2)And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

3. 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 traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

**Popular Interpretation**

1.He has a choice ofwhich road to

take, and one of them “wants

wear,” meaning that not as many

people have gone down it

2. Once he’s made the choice to go

down one road, he knows that he

will probably never face this

same choice again. The chance

is lost. He is committed to the

path fewer have gone down.

3. Because he chose a different

road than most people choose,

he had a completely different life

than he might have led otherwise.

This small difference earlier made

a huge difference later.

**Critical Interpretation**

Even though one road was slightly

less worn than the other, they

were really “about the same.”

The roads are equal. They both

have leaves that no one has

trampled on.

He is looking back on the

choice from a time in the future

and putting more of meaning

into it than there was at the

time. The roads were almost

equal. There really was no

difference. He’s not being

completely honest with himself

or he’s being overly dramatic

about a minor choice he made a

long time ago.