

Walden

Henry David Thoreau

What does Thoreau mean by calling resignation a form of desperation rather than acceptance?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	Quiet desperation
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION Economy

START I sometimes wonder that we can be so frivolous, I may almost say, as to attend to the gross but somewhat foreign form of servitude called Negro Slavery END But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.

PASSAGE ID	sec-wal-01
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THE MOVE

Turn a broad claim into a challenge to conventional explanation

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Thoreau's phrase 'quiet desperation' rejects the comforting idea that resignation proves maturity or acceptance. He reframes socially normal routines as evidence of a crisis people have learned not to name.

MARK

Circle the phrase 'quiet desperation.' Underline the nearby descriptions of lives that appear ordinary or respectable. Mark the sentence where Thoreau changes the usual meaning of resignation.

NOTICE

- What does 'quiet' add to the idea of desperation?
- Why might resignation look respectable from the outside?

- What conventional explanation of adult life is Thoreau asking the reader to stop accepting?

THINK

Answer provisionally: What does Thoreau mean by calling resignation a form of desperation rather than acceptance? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: What does Thoreau mean by calling resignation a form of desperation rather than acceptance? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	Thoreau calls resignation desperation because a person may appear calm while living inside conditions he experiences as intolerable but has stopped imagining can change. Social normality can hide an unacknowledged crisis.
EVIDENCE	Use 'quiet desperation' together with examples of accepted routines or self-enslavement that Thoreau presents as normal-looking but damaging.
WATCH FOR	Do not define desperation simply as strong sadness. Explain why the word changes the usual positive meaning of resignation.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

STUDENT PAGE · SAME PASSAGE, SAME THINKING

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Henry David Thoreau

What does Thoreau mean by calling resignation a form of desperation rather than acceptance?

START ANCHOR	I sometimes wonder that we can be so frivolous, I may almost say, as to attend to the gross but somewhat foreign form of servitude called Negro Slavery
END ANCHOR	But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.

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OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK - Circle the phrase 'quiet desperation.' Underline the nearby descriptions of lives that appear ordinary or respectable.

Mark the sentence where Thoreau changes the usual meaning of resignation.

2. NOTICE - What does 'quiet' add to the idea of desperation? Why might resignation look respectable from the outside? What conventional explanation of adult life is Thoreau asking the reader to stop accepting?
3. THINK - Answer provisionally: What does Thoreau mean by calling resignation a form of desperation rather than acceptance?
4. WRITE - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.