

English 302

Chapter 14 The Road Not Taken

Summary

The Road Not Taken is a well-known poem by Robert Frost on making decisions in life. The poem depicts the dilemma of a person standing at a road with a diversion. The road represents our life in the poem, and the path we do not follow is referred to as "the road not taken." The poem is about the decisions we make. We should proceed cautiously while making decisions since we cannot reverse them, and our choices shape our lives.

Important points from the poem:

- The Road Not Taken is a well-known poem by Robert Frost and it is about making choices in our life.
- The poem describes the confusion of a person standing at a road with fork. In the poem, the road symbolizes our life and the path that we don't choose is "the road not taken". The poem talks about the choices we make. We should be wise while making a decision as we cannot undo them and our life is determined by our choices.
- According to the poet, he was strolling down the road when he came to a junction. He could only walk on one of the pathways. After much deliberation, the poet chose to follow a different path.
- He believed both roads were equally good, but as he started walking on the grassy road, he realized it was a better path for him. He picked the one that appeared to be less travelled over and saved the other for another day, even though he knew he would never get the chance to walk over it.
- He recognized after a short way on the road that both paths were alike. There wasn't much of a difference between them. He felt that his future depended on the decision he took, and that if he went further on the chosen path, he would not be able to turn back.
- The poet communicates through the poem that the decisions we make have a big influence on our future. We can't go back in time and change our minds if we make the incorrect decision.
- The poem encourages us to be careful when making life decisions. When making decisions, one should be very intelligent and attentive since our decisions determine our destiny. One wrong mistake might cause us to regret it for the rest of our lives.
- **Message of the poem:** The poet wishes to inform us that in life, man is confronted with several circumstances in which he must make decisions, some of which are important. We must make the right choice by keeping in mind that we can't reverse the decision and that 'opportunity knocks only once.

Literary devices used in the poem:

1. Metaphor: The poem has several metaphors, such as a road, a fork in the road, and yellow-woods. The road in the poem is a metaphor for life, and the fork in the road depicts the decisions we make to determine the course of our lives. Similarly, yellow woodlands are a metaphor for making difficult decisions in one's life. These metaphors used in this poem emphasize the significance of the decisions we make in various situations and their consequences in our life.
2. Imagery: Imagery is used to evoke feelings in the readers' five senses. The poet has employed visual imagery such as leaves, yellow woodlands, and flowers. These visuals help

readers in really seeing and understanding what they are reading. The image of the road facilitates readers in visualizing the road, which provides a navigation path for the traveler.

3. Simile: A simile is a device used to compare things with familiar things to let the readers know it easily. There is one simile used in the second stanza such as “as just as fair”. It shows how the poet has linked the road less taken to the easy way through life.
4. Personification: In the third line of the second stanza, Robert Frost personifies the road. It is said above, "Because it was grassy and craved wear," as if the road were human and want to wear and tear.

Important words from the poem:

- Diverged: Separate/Go In A Different Direction
- Yellow Wood: A Forest With Decomposing Leaves
- Wanted Wear: something which has not been used/ the path that has not been explored by travellers.
- Claim: an assertion that something is true/being entitled to something

Evaluate yourself:

- What was the poet’s dilemma?
- Did the poet take his decision quickly?
- Where does the traveler find himself? What problem does he face?
- “Looking back, does the poet regret his choice or accept it.”What do you think these lines of the poem mean?
- Explain the message of the poem?

Do you know?

Robert Frost was a 20th century pastoral poet from rural New England. Frost's earliest works were published in the United Kingdom in the 1910s, but he quickly rose to become the most widely read and often widely acclaimed poet in his own country. Frost won the Pulitzer Prize four times. On March 26, 1874, he was born in San Francisco; California. March 26th marks the 145th birth anniversary of the timeless American poet Robert Frost. Frost was famous for his knowledge of human behaviour. The Road Not Taken’ is perhaps his most famous work. Other popular poems by him include ‘Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening’, ‘Mending Wall’ and ‘Acquainted with the Night’.

Expand your horizon.

“It's important to think carefully about choices that will have a big impact on your life.” Do you ever regret any of your decisions or choices?

Write your response on a piece of paper and consider methods to justify your viewpoint.