**The Road Not Taken**

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## **Introduction to the Poem**

In the poem - ‘The Road Not Taken’, the road symbolizes our life. The poet says that the path that we don’t choose in our life is ‘the road not taken’. He describes his feelings about that choice that he had left in the past. The path which we have chosen, decides our future, our destination. The important message that the poet wants to give is that the choice that we make has an impact on our future and if we make a wrong choice, we regret it but cannot go back on it. So, we must be wise while making choices.

## **Poem and Explanation**



Stanza 1

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveller, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Once the poet was walking down a road and then there was a diversion, there were two different paths and he had to choose one out them. The poet says that as he was one person, he could travel on one road only. He had to choose one out of these two roads Yellow wood means a forest with leaves which are wearing out and they have turned yellow in colour – the season of autumn. It represents a world which is full of people, where people have been living for many years. They represent people who are older than the poet. The poet kept standing there and looked at the path very carefully as far as he could see it. Before taking the path, he wanted to know how it was. Was it suitable for him or no. He was able to see the path till from where it curved after which it was covered with trees and was hidden. It happens in our life also when we have choices, we have alternatives, but we have to choose only one out of them, we take time to think about the pros and cons, whether it is suitable for us or not and only then, we take a decision on what path we should choose.



Stanza 2

Then took the other, 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.

The poet kept on looking at one path for a long time to check if it is the right path for him or not and them he decided and started walking on another path because he felt that the both paths were equally good. He says just as fair, so, he felt that both paths were equally good and started walking on one of them. He adds that maybe he felt that the path was better for him so he chooses it as it had grass on it which means that it was unused. Not many people had walked on this path earlier that is why this path was grassy. ‘And wanted wear’ means that it was not walked over by many people. After he walked on the path for some distance, he realized that both the paths had been worm out the same way. Both the paths were similar and worn out.  Even in our life, we take any path or option but all of them have the same benefits, disadvantages, problems, challenges and we must face them. We think that we are choosing a better option, but it is not that way.



Stanza 3

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.

trodden means walked over.

The poet says that both the paths were similar that morning. Both had leaves on them and no one had stepped on them as they were still green in colour. He decided that that day he would take one path and keep the other path for another day, although he knew that one way leads on to another way. He knew that he could not go back on the choice that he had made. Similarly, even in our life once we choose an option, we must keep on moving ahead with that option and we never get a chance to come back and take the other option that we had left earlier.

Stanza 4

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,

And that has made all the difference.

He says that in the future, he will take a deep breath and say that once upon a time, he had reached such a point in life that there were two options for him and he travelled on that road which had been travelled upon by lesser number of people. That decision of his decided his future. Similarly, in future, when you grow up, then you will say that once upon a time, when you were young, you had two options. The choice that you made, made you what you became of it. This is a very strong message for all the students - that you should be wise and be careful while making choices out of the options that you have in your life because your future depends on the choice that you make today.

## **Robert Frost And A Summary of The Road Not Taken**

"The Road Not Taken" is an ambiguous poem that allows the reader to think about choices in life, whether to go with the mainstream or go it alone. If life is a journey, this poem highlights those times in life when a decision has to be made. Which way will you go?

The ambiguity springs from the question of free will versus determinism, whether the speaker in the poem consciously decides to take the road that is off the beaten track or only does so because he doesn't fancy the road with the bend in it. External factors therefore make up his mind for him.

Robert Frost wrote this poem to highlight a trait of, and poke fun at, his friend Edward Thomas, an English-Welsh poet, who, when out walking with Frost in England would often regret not having taken a different path. Thomas would sigh over what they might have seen and done, and Frost thought this quaintly romantic.

* In other words, Frost's friend regretted not taking the road that might have offered the best opportunities, despite it being an unknown.

Frost liked to tease and goad. He told Thomas: "No matter which road you take, you'll always sigh and wish you'd taken another." So it's ironic that Frost meant the poem to be somewhat light-hearted, but it turned out to be anything but. People take it very seriously.

It is the hallmark of the true poet to take such everyday realities, in this case, the sighs of a friend on a country walk, and transform them into something so much more.

"The Road Not Taken" is all about what did not happen: This person, faced with an important conscious decision, chose the least popular, the path of most resistance. He was destined to go down one, regretted not being able to take both, so he sacrificed one for the other.

Ultimately, the reader is left to make up their own mind about the emotional state of the speaker at the end. Was the choice of the road less travelled a positive one? It certainly made "all the difference," but Frost does not make it clear just what this difference is.

All of Robert Frost's poems can be found in this exceptional book, [The Collected Poems](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Collected-Poems-Robert-Frost/dp/0099583097/ref%3Dpd_lpo_sbs_14_img_0/261-7718753-0794936?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=JERP8HKMAR1Q97NCWA0G), which I use for all my analyses. It contains all of his classics and more. It's the most comprehensive collection currently on offer.