

## Ch 1.2 Fire and Ice

- Robert Frost

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### Theme

The poem 'Fire and Ice' by Robert Frost revolves around the theme that human emotions are destructive when allowed to run amok (out of control). They can destroy a person morally, mentally and physically. The poet impresses upon the readers, the destructive results of bearing ill feeling like - greed, avarice, lust, ~~et~~ conflict, fury, hatred, intolerance, etc.

desire - wish

hold - to take side, favour

perish - die

suffice - be sufficient

Answer the following questions

1 Some say the world will end in fire  
Some say in ice  
From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who ~~taste~~ favour fire.

- What is the poet's opinion of the world in these lines?
- What is the poet's opinion about the world?
- What is the contradictory opinion of public?
- How are ice and fire similar to each other though they have ~~contra~~ contradictory traits?

- A (a) In the poet's opinion the world will end in fire.
- According to the poet, the world will end in fire.
  - The contradictory opinion of public is the debate whether the world will end in fire or ice.

2 ~~But~~ But if it had to perish twice I think I know enough of hate To say that for destruction ice is also great and would suffice.

- What does 'it' refer to in the first ~~place~~ line?

(b) What do you mean by 'perish'?

(c) What does ice stand for?

(d) What would be the cause of destruction?

A (a) 'It' refers to the world.

(b) Perish means to die or to be destroyed.

(c) Ice stands for coldness.

(d) Ice or fire would be the cause of destruction.

3. For Frost, what do 'fire' and 'ice' stand for?

A The word 'fire' stands for desire. In the poem, it indicates all types of greed and lust. In today's world, mankind's greed is endangering the very existence of the planet Earth. The word 'ice' in the poem indicates hatred and indifference which is cold as 'ice'.

4. Briefly write about the ideas about how the world will end.

A The world will end as a direct result of either fire or ice. Some scientists believed that the world would be ~~the~~ incinerated from its fiery core, while others were convinced that the coming ice age would destroy all living things on the Earth's surface. Frost introduces a more emotional side, associating desire with fire and hatred with ice. The poem, thus, does not allow



for any other opinions in the black and white debate between fire and ice.

5. The poet presents two reasons which will lead to the destruction of the humanity. What values do you garner from the two possible causes provided by him?

A The poet provides and deals with two possible causes for the end of the world. He points more ~~two~~ towards the emotional and sentimental side of the issue. As for him, fire denotes deep passion and burning desire, while ice is highlighted for its icy cold and hatred side of the emotions. He favours both the arguments and says that either the deep burning passion or the cold hatred and jealousy factor will push the people to walk on the path of destruction. The poet is sure of this destruction of humanity. He first talks about the destruction because of fire and in case this fails, then ice will end the world. The love that people have for one another, people will tend to hate each other. These negative emotions will become so strong that it will surpass all the love and lead to the destruction of humanity.