



# If—

Rudyard Kipling

Published Date: 1910

Meter Key: Unstressed syllables / **stressed syllables**

Stanza 1

1 If **you** can **keep** your **head** when **all about** you  
2 Are **losing theirs** and **blaming it** on **you**,  
3 If **you** can **trust yourself** when **all men doubt** you,  
4 But **make allowance for** their **doubting too**;  
5 If **you** can **wait** and **not** be **tired** by **waiting**,  
6 Or **being lied about**, don't **deal** in **lies**,  
7 Or **being hated**, **don't** give **way** to **hating**,  
8 And **yet** don't **look** too **good**, nor **talk** too **wise**:

Stanza 2

9 If **you** can **dream**—and **not** make **dreams** your **master**;  
10 If **you** can **think**—and **not** make **thoughts** your **aim**;  
11 If **you** can **meet** with **Triumph and Disaster**  
12 And **treat** those **two impostors just** the **same**;  
13 If **you** can **bear** to **hear** the **truth** you've **spoken**  
14 Twisted by **knaves** to **make** a **trap** for **fools**,  
15 Or **watch** the **things** you **gave** your **life** to, **broken**,  
16 And **stoop** and **build** 'em **up** with **worn-out tools**:

Stanza 3

17 If **you** can **make** one **heap** of **all** your **winnings**  
18 And **risk** it **on** one **turn** of **pitch-and-toss**,  
19 And **lose**, and **start again** at **your beginnings**  
20 And **never breathe** a **word about** your **loss**;  
21 If **you** can **force** your **heart** and **nerve** and **sinew**  
22 To **serve** your **turn** long **after** **they** are **gone**,  
23 And **so** hold **on** when **there** is **nothing** in **you**  
24 Except the **Will** which **says** to **them**: 'Hold **on**!'

## Key Information

**Speaker:** A father

**Central Message:** It's important to maintain integrity, resilience, and humility in the face of adversity

**Form:** Octave

**Meter:** Iambic Pentameter

**Rhyme Scheme:** ABAB CDCD

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## Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling was an incredibly popular English poet.

His writing is read around the world and studied in classrooms in multiple languages.

Biography



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25 If **you** can **talk** with **crowds** and **keep** your **virtue**,  
26 Or **walk** with **Kings**—nor **lose** the **common touch**,  
27 If **neither foes** nor **loving friends** can **hurt** you,  
28 If **all** men **count** with **you**, but **none** too **much**;  
29 If **you** can **fill** the **unforgiving minute**  
30 With **sixty seconds' worth** of **distance run**,  
31 Yours **is** the **Earth** and **everything that's** in it,  
32 And—**which** is **more**—you'll **be** a **Man**, my **son**!