



# If—

Rudyard Kipling

Published Date: 1910

## 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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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:**

A  
A  
A  
A  
B  
C  
B  
C

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:**

D  
E  
D  
E  
F  
G  
F  
G

Stanza 3

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

Stanza 4

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