

## If

Rudyard Kipling

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

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

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

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

### About the Poet:

Joseph Rudyard Kipling was born on Dec 30, 1865 in Bombay (now Mumbai) in India. He was educated in England but returned to India in 1882. Rudyard Kipling was an English journalist, short story writer, poet and novelist. Kipling's works of fiction include 'The Jungle Book', 'Kim' and many short stories. He is regarded as a major innovator in the art of the short story writing. His books for children are regarded as classics of children's literature. Kipling was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1907. He died in 1936.

### About the Poem:

'IF' is a father's message to his son on how to be a man. It is a didactic poem, a work meant to give instructions. The poet advises in the poem to control one's actions and feelings. One must trust self but allow to doubt too. He urges to take risks but also to avoid bragging. Kipling provides insight to build a fair attitude towards life. 'IF' gives an instruction in cultivating several specific traits of a good leader.

### Glossary:

triumph: victory

disaster: an event that causes great damage

knave: an old fashioned word for dishonest man

build'em up: to rebuild the broken parts of your life

pitch and toss: a game in which the player who manages to throw a coin to toss.

sinew: a part of your body that connects a muscle to a bone.  
(something that gives strength and support)

### 1. Choose the correct alternatives :

- (a) "If you can keep your head when all about you ..... blaming it on you", The poet asks to keep your head-
- (i) stand straight
  - (ii) stand at ease
  - (iii) remain calm and composed
  - (iv) take care of your head so that it doesn't get hurt.
- (b) the poet addresses this poem 'IF' to-
- (i) son
  - (ii) family
  - (iii) daughter
  - (iv) wife

### 2. Answer the following questions in 15-20 words each:-

- (a) What should you do when all men doubt you?
- (b) "If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue." What do you understand by 'talk with crowds and keep your virtue'?
- (c) What is meant by "the unforgiving minute" in the poem?
- (d) What does "pitch and toss" refer to in the poem?
- (e) How does Kipling present hopes and fears?

**3. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:**

- (a) Why does the poet say that triumph and disaster are two imposters?
- (b) What is expected of a perfect man when he loses all that he has achieved or gained?
- (c) "And never breath a word about your loss". Elucidate.
- (d) What essential qualities of a true leader are highlighted in the poem?

**4. Answer the following questions in 150 words each :**

- (a) What feelings does the poem awaken in you? How do your feelings connect with those of the poet?
- (b) The poem concludes with "You'll be a man." What kind of a man is implied here?
- (c) Comment on the mood and tone of the poem.