

If

by 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, 5
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, 10
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two **impostors**¹ just the same:
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by **knaves**² to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, 15
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: 20
If you can force your heart and nerve and **sinew**³
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, 25
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, 30
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And--which is more--you'll be a Man, my son!

1 **impostors**: people who pretend to be someone else

2 **knave**: tricky, deceitful, unprincipled person

3 **sinew**: tissue that connects muscles to bones

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the second "if" statement in the poem?

- A "If you can keep your head when all about you / Are losing theirs and blaming it on you"
- B "If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, / But make allowance for their doubting too"
- C "If you can dream--and not make dreams your master"
- D "If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster / And treat those two impostors just the same"

2. The poem begins by describing conditions and ends by describing consequences. In which line does it shift from describing conditions to describing consequences?

- A line 8
- B line 14
- C line 26
- D line 31

3. Read the first stanza of the poem.

Based on lines 5 and 6, what can you conclude about the speaker's values?

- A The speaker values curiosity and creativity.
- B The speaker values patience and honesty.
- C The speaker values good looks and political debates.
- D The speaker values the opinions of other people.

4. Read the last stanza of the poem.

What is the speaker probably urging the addressee to do in lines 29 and 30?

- A The speaker is probably urging the addressee to pay more attention to kings than to common people.
- B The speaker is probably urging the addressee to exercise more often.
- C The speaker is probably urging the addressee to make the most of his time.
- D The speaker is probably urging the addressee to relax and enjoy the moment.

5. What is a theme of this poem?

- A Becoming a grownup takes confidence, determination, and virtue.
- B Most people handle failure better than they handle success.
- C Talking about your problems is the first step toward solving them.
- D People should spend more time in crowds and less time around royalty.

6. Read these lines from the poem:

If you can think--and not make thoughts your aim, 10
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, 15
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

To personify means to give human-like characteristics to something that is not human. What does the poet personify in these lines?

- A "thoughts"
- B "Triumph and Disaster"
- C "knaves" and "fools"
- D "tools"

7. Read this stanza from the poem:

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: 20
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!"

To what does the pronoun "them" refer?

- A "winnings"
- B "pitch-and-toss"
- C "beginnings"
- D "heart and nerve and sinew"

8. What does the speaker declare will be "yours" in line 31?

9. Based on the last line of the poem, what can you conclude about who the speaker of this poem is? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

10. What might the speaker's purpose be? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
