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| IF.....  [Rudyard Kipling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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! |

**If—**

"**If—**" is a poem written in 1895[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-0) by British Nobel laureate [Rudyard Kipling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudyard_Kipling). It was first published in the "Brother Square Toes" chapter of [*Rewards and Fairies*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rewards_and_Fairies), Kipling's 1910 collection of short stories and poems. Like [William Ernest Henley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Ernest_Henley)'s "[Invictus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invictus" \o "Invictus)", it is a memorable evocation of [Victorian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_era) [stoicism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoicism) and the "[stiff upper lip](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stiff_upper_lip)" that [popular culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_culture) has made into a traditional [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) [virtue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtue).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-1) Its status is confirmed both by the number of [parodies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parody) it has inspired, and by the widespread popularity it still enjoys amongst Britons. It is often voted Britain's favourite poem.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-2)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-3) The poem's line, "If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those two impostors just the same" is written on the wall of the [Centre Court](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centre_Court) players' entrance at the British tennis tournament, [Wimbledon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Championships,_Wimbledon), and the entire poem was read in a promotional video for the Wimbledon 2008 gentleman's final by Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-4)[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-5)[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-6)

According to Kipling in his autobiography *Something of Myself*, posthumously published in 1937, the poem was inspired by Dr. [Leander Starr Jameson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leander_Starr_Jameson), who in 1895 led a [raid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jameson_Raid) by British forces against the [Boers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boer) in [South Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa), subsequently called the [Jameson Raid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jameson_Raid).[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-7) This defeat increased the tensions that ultimately led to the [Second Boer War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Boer_War). The British press, however, portrayed Jameson as a [hero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero) in the middle of the disaster, and the actual defeat as a British victory.[*[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed" \o "Wikipedia:Citation needed)*]

**Reaction**

Kipling himself noted in *Something of Myself* that the poem had been "printed as cards to hang up in offices and bedrooms; illuminated text-wise and anthologized to weariness".[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-8)

[T. S. Eliot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T._S._Eliot) in his essays on Kipling's work describes Kipling's verse as "great verse" that sometimes unintentionally changes into poetry. [George Orwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Orwell)—an ambivalent admirer of Kipling's work who hated the poet's politics—compared people who only knew "If—" "and some of his more sententious poems", to [Colonel Blimp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonel_Blimp).[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-9)

[Khushwant Singh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khushwant_Singh), the prominent Indian writer, historian and journalist, claims that Kipling's "If—" is "the essence of the message of The Gita in English".[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94#cite_note-10) The text Singh refers to is the [Bhagavad Gita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavad_Gita), the ancient Indian scripture.