

Poems for Curiosity

I Keep Six Honest Serving-Men

(following the story "Elephant's Child" in "**Just So Stories**")

by Rudyard Kipling

I keep six honest serving-men
 (They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
 And How and Where and Who.
I send them over land and sea,
 I send them east and west;
But after they have worked for me,
 I give them all a rest.

I let them rest from nine till five,
 For I am busy then,
As well as breakfast, lunch, and tea,
 For they are hungry men.
But different folk have different views;
 I know a person small
She keeps ten million serving-men,
 Who get no rest at all!
She sends em abroad on her own affairs,
 From the second she opens her eyes
One million Hows, Two million Wheres,
 And seven million Whys!

- ["I Keep Six Honest Serving Men" by Rudyard Kipling](#) - 2:21 min. Read Aloud with script

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,
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 by Rudyard Kipling - 2:21 min.](#) – Read aloud video of poem with text
[IF by Rudyard Kipling 2:58 min.](#) - Recitation

Thinking

If you think you're beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win,
But you think you can't,
It's almost a cinch you won't.
If you think you'll lose, you're lost,
For out in the world you'll find
Success begins with a fellow's will,
It's all in the state of mind.
If you think you're outclassed, you are.
You've got to think high to rise.
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But soon or late, the man who wins,
Is the one who thinks he can.
—Walter D. Wintle

EQUIPMENT

Figure it out for yourself, my lad,
You've all that the greatest of men have had,
Two arms, two hands, two legs, two eyes
And a brain to use if you would be wise.
With this equipment they all began,
So start for the top and say, "I can."

Look them over, the wise and great
They take their food from a common plate,
And similar knives and forks they use,
With similar laces they tie their shoes.
The world considers them brave and smart,
But you've all they had when they made their start.

You can triumph and come to skill,
You can be great if you only will.
You're well equipped for what fight you choose,
You have legs and arms and a brain to use,
And the man who has risen great deeds to do
Began his life with no more than you.

You are the handicap you must face,
You are the one who must choose your place,
You must say where you want to go,
How much you will study the truth to know.
God has equipped you for life, but He
Lets you decide what you want to be.

Courage must come from the soul within,
The man must furnish the will to win.
So figure it out for yourself, my lad.
You were born with all that the great have had,
With your equipment they all began,
Get hold of yourself and say: "I can."

--Edgar A. Guest

