An Explication Of The Poem “If” Essay, Research Paper

An Explication of the poem

“If”

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English II (H)

If

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 imposters 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 wornout 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 breath 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!

Rudyard Kipling?s life, style, and writing are very interesting and it?ll be

remembered for a long period of time, much longer into the 20th century. On December

30, 1865, Rudyard Joseph Kipling was born in Bombay, India. Kipling wrote 19th

century in his short stories, novels, and poems. He used little symbolism in his work.

Kipling wrote adventure and with a didactic mind, which showed in his works.

“The survival of the fittest” was in Kipling?s vision of impearilism and British Life, and

in his eyes, the love of animals was the law of the jungle. He mostly wrote on a defensive

side. In 1936, Kipling?s poor health was reported throughout the whole world

foreshadowing his death. Kipling died from a fatal hemmorrhage two days after King

George. His ashes were buried in poets? Corner in West Minister Abbey. Rudyard

Kipling was overall an outstanding figure in the 19th centrury. Even though his style has

“dropped out of modern literature” his stories and novels are still heard today.

In the poem “If” there are thirty-two lines or verses, and four stanzas. The

metrical pattern alternates from trochaic pentameter to iambic pentameter from one line

to the other. The rhyme sceme is ABAB except for the first four lines which all rhyme.

Examples of sound devices include aliteration. There is aliteration in line six, “Or being

lied about, don?t deal in lies”, line eight, “And yet don?t look too good, nor talk too

wise”, and line twelve “And treat those two imposters just the same.” Other signs of

aliteraion are found in lines fourteen, eighteen, twenty-four, twenty-six, thirty, and in line

thirty-two. Another example of a sound device is assonance. Assonance can be found in

line one, “If you can keep your head when all about you”, line sixteen, “And stoop and

build ?em up with worn-out tools”, and line eighteen, “And risk it on one turn of pitch-

and-toss”. Other signs of assonance is seen in lines twelve, thirteen, sixteen, twenty,

twenty-seven, and twenty-three. There is no onomatopoeia in the poem “If”.

There is few signs of literal language. In line nine it says, “If you can

dream?and not make dreams your master,” there is a sense of being in a dream world.

In line thirteeen, “Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, And stoop and build

?em up with worn-out tools,” a picture of someone working with old tools runs through

the mind. In line twenty-five, “If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,” this

line lets the reader imagine talking to a group of people. In line thirty, “With sixty

seconds? worth of distance run,” the reader imagines running down a track.

In the poem “If” figurative language is shown rarely. In line eleven, “If you can

meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those two impostors just the same,” there is

personification. In line twenty-four, “Except the Will which says to them: “Hold on!”

In his poem, Rudyard Kipling tries to set forth his ideas of what a real man should

be like. He states many morals and advice that people can use in there everyday life. He

tells the reader how not to let the reader let the real world bring you down, and not to be

self-conceited with yourself our thoughts. The poem can apply not only to men but also

to women and the entire world. His thoughts and morals can always be found in any of

the poems he writes.