



REVIEW

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AUTHOR Rudyard Kipling **ILLUSTRATOR** Giovanni Manna **IMPRINT** Creative Editions

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"... the grandeur of Manna's scenes conveys the loftiness of Kipling's sentiments."

Kipling's inspirational poem—the one that begins, "If you can keep your head when all about you / Are losing theirs"—describes how to preserve one's honor by the principled avoidance of political and moral pitfalls. Italian artist Manna imagines the "you" of the poem as a boy journeying through a series of watercolor landscapes: fields under billowing clouds, misty nights, craggy mountaintops. To accompany the poem's first line, Manna paints the boy watching from a great green meadow as storm clouds approach; he stands and watches with a cool head, rather than running in fear. For "If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew / To serve your turn long after they are gone," Manna shows the boy climbing a rocky pitch, the peaks of other mountains poking through the clouds below. Flying kites represent temptation, and dull-eyed marionettes represent allies who can't be trusted ("If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken / Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools"). Though young readers may not fathom the poem's complexities, the grandeur of Manna's scenes conveys the loftiness of Kipling's sentiments.

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