

ANALYZING POETRY: WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY

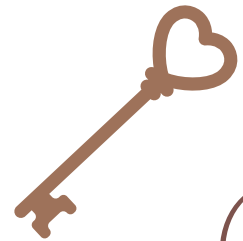
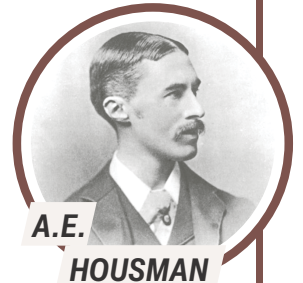
by A.E. Housman

Read the poem by A.E. Housman. Then, answer the questions on the following page.



When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
“Give crowns and pounds and **guineas**
But not your heart away;
5 Give pearls away and rubies
But keep your fancy free.”
But I was one-and-twenty,
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
10 I heard him say again,
“The heart out of the **bosom**
Was never given in **vain**;
'Tis paid with sighs a plenty
And sold for endless **rue**.”
15 And I am two-and-twenty,
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.



guineas: British coins **vain:** without sacrifice or purpose
bosom: chest **rue:** never-ending regret

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Answer the following questions about the poem.



1. What kind of advice does the wise man give the speaker?

- a. medical
- b. love
- c. career

2. Part A: How does the speaker first react to the man's advice?

- a. The speaker thanks the man for the advice.
- b. The speaker promises to follow the advice.
- c. The speaker wonders whether the advice is helpful.
- d. The speaker ignores the man's advice.

Part B: Cite evidence from the poem to support your answer to part A.

3. Which word best describes the speaker's tone?

- a. reflective
- b. curious
- c. optimistic
- d. playful

4. What effect does the repetition of the line "When I was one-and-twenty" have on the poem?

5. Part A: Based on lines 15 and 16, what can you infer about the speaker? Choose two.

- a. He's heartbroken.
- b. He's happily married.
- c. He lost all his money.
- d. He blames the wise man for his problems.
- e. He now understands the wise man's warning.

Part B: Cite evidence from the poem to support your answer to part A.

6. Give an example of alliteration in the poem.

7. Summarize the theme of the poem.
