“If”

1. I predict this poem will give the reader an ultimatum, or set of conditionals, based on its title.
2. In the poem, a father is speaking to his son.
3. I think the author intended his poem to reach any young person, for it provides inspirational and worldly thinking helpful to a young mind.
4. The author’s tone is one of significance, importance, and seriousness.
5. In the poem, no actual action happens — it is all hypothetical talk from the father.
6. I worked to define knaves, which explained the second paragraph much more clearly.
7. The author’s insight in this poem is to strive to maintain a clear sense of self, and refuse to be suckered into the trap of engaging with the liars, cheaters, and deceivers in the world.
8. The author creates imagery by suggesting situations which we can all paint a picture of drawing on our personal experience, such as forcing ourselves to go on when we don’t have much will left, or to start fresh after a fatal mistake. It adds a sense of personality and gravity to the poem, overall.

Invictus

1. I expect this poem, based on its title, “Invictus,” to talk about a broad topic, such as dedication or willpower.
2. In this poem, no one is speaking to anyone, directly.
3. I think the author intended this poem to reach an audience of uninspired or “on the brink” readers, to remind them of what they’re capable of.
4. The speaker in this poem is the only person, and is assumed to be William Ernest Henley.
5. The man appears wounded, yet stops to consider overall, and realizes his unrelenting will and lack of fear.
6. I didn’t need to define any words in this poem.
7. The author’s message in “Invictus” is that each person is in charge of their destiny, or is the “master of [their] fate.”
8. Late in the poem, the author uses repetition and rhythm to strongly deliver his last two (and most important) lines. This leaves the poem with a sense of strength and clarity.