



## Something Of Myself: For My Friends Known And Unknown

*Rudyard Kipling*

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Kipling was one of the most popular writers in English, both prose and verse, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Henry James famously said of him: "Kipling strikes me personally as the most complete man of genius (as distinct from fine intelligence) that I have ever known." In 1907, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. This book is the world famous autobiography that Kipling penned toward the end of his life and sheds much detail on his life, career, travels and influences.

## **Something Of Myself: For My Friends Known And Unknown Details**

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## **From Reader Review Something Of Myself: For My Friends Known And Unknown for online ebook**

### **Bryan Paul Sullo says**

I'm a little upset at R.K. for starting work on his autobiography with the churchard gate in sight. It remained unfinished at his death, and it was left to his wife and others to edit the thing for publication.

Another matter I will have to take up with him, should we meet somewhere in the great beyond, is that the book is essentially about his professional life, and, beyond his youth, conveys few details of the man, himself.

Copious Kiplingisms are strewn throughout the book, which makes it an entertaining read in its own right, and his description of his writing process is instructive (until he starts recounting his pens, inkpots and other sundries).

If you're looking for a book about Rudyard Kipling, the man, there are other biographies, which, I'm sure give more insight, but this is an important book, nonetheless, which any fan of his writing should read.

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### **Mhbright says**

Appropriately titled autobiography, a sketch rather than a detailed portrait, but full of interest.

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### **Josh says**

Kipling had a popularity with other writers (Joyce put his talent next to Tolstoy's; William and Henry James loved him) that seems mysterious until you actually read him. His sentences are dense and tactile - whole pages drip with details made resonant and powerful through economy, architecture, and one of the most eclectic vocabularies I've ever read. "Something of Myself" is his very self-protective memoir, interesting especially for the parts about India and writing. The last chapter, called "Working Tools," is fascinating the way it's fascinating to listen to a mason talk about a wall he's making. A sort of proto craft confession, like the "Art of..." interviews in the Paris Review. Ink types, hours of work, revision, favorite paper: all this is discussed as pedantically (and therefore, convincingly) as possible. But the most compelling part, for me at least, is when Kipling speaks about his "Daemon." The idea of writer as vessel for a dictating power is usually a recipe for laziness, but Kipling's precise and unromantic tone makes it sound like just another tool (if maybe the most important).

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### **Esther Marie says**

Kipling's style was a bit too dry for me. Perhaps his modesty dictated the format, but I found it difficult to easily recognize important milestones in his life; much of the narrative was episodic and unfocused. I believe

this has a lot to do with the fact that this work wasn't completed at the time of his death. In any event, I would not recommend this book.

## umberto says

3.75 stars

I didn't think I'd have any chance to read this memoir by Rudyard Kipling till I came across this one in the DASA BookCafe in Bangkok early in August 2012. I had read some of its few excerpts somewhere and longed to read it years ago. When I was young, I first read a Thai translated version (?????? ??????????) and wondered who wrote this wonderful story. It's a pity its author was vaguely revealed to me then. Till many years later, in my early 20s I finally found some of his books, especially "The Jungle Books" in some college/university libraries and the hero's name *Mowgli* popped up in my mind. Therefore, I understood why there are two Thai names, that is, the one mentioned above and another rarely heard one ??????. It's obviously a matter of Thai pronunciation from two translators, and I wonder which one has been more popular so far. For some reason, ????? has been more popular and seemingly widely-used; however, *Mowgli* generally read as two syllables, that is, /mow.gli/ = /???.??/? is closer in its pronunciation than ????? /mau.kli/.

This 8-chapter memoir is not lengthy (some 138 pages) so we can reasonably finish reading it if we've known and admired him. First of all, he was the first English writer who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1907. Second, he wrote the inspiring poem 'If ---' [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%20E2%80%94>] and innumerable others. Third, he was the first who famously stated that "East was East and West was West and never the twain shall meet." (p. 163). This has been a bit controversial since then, that is, some agree while some don't.

From his autobiography, I think, we can understand more and sympathize with him on his adversity while staying with a foster family in England, learning to cope with bullying by a few reckless boys and doing his best as a fledgling writer in the world of fierce, cold-blooded literary competition. Reading him may not interest some readers in the 21st century, however, we can learn from what he whole-heartedly wrote for the world to see, read and reflect. I read some of his short stories, I mean those understandable ones. Without fear or guilt, I've simply skipped those I don't have free time to tackle. At least, from his short story "In the House of Suddhoo" I found this sentence uniquely amazing and brilliant, "She was also beautiful, but that was her own affair." (**Collected Stories**, Everyman's Library, 1994. p. 6) since I have never read anyone who wrote like this before.

Therefore, this book as the version in his own words should by all means be read by Kipling's newcomers, enthusiasts or general readers so that they can see more light in terms of his ups and downs in which, interestingly, they might arguably affect his life and literary motives; one of the reasons is that when we read any of his works, we couldn't help wondering what he had in mind while writing that work.

## Deborah Cater says

It's a shame that those who have little of interest to tell us release the third volume of their biographies by the age of 30, whilst others with a fascinating history leave it until the final countdown before starting their first

volume. Such is the case with Kipling who did not leave enough time to complete his auto-biography before being called onto a greater place.

Where that greater place would be is difficult to say. From the first paragraph Kipling invokes Allah, and later states that as Islam was his first taste of religion he found it the sweeter taste. And so begins the slim volume, contradicting the racist colonialist impression that many post-colonialists force upon him and any of their readers.

Kipling was a product of his time, and a staunch colonialist but that does not mean that his works represent any race that is non-white, European as second class. Kipling had a genuine love for India, though his views of Hindus were negatively influenced by the Islamic outlook of his early life, and this is reflected in his works.

Kipling lightly touches on each of his works showing how his experiences shaped them, leaving some legwork for the reader. He met Hardy, Theodore Roosevelt, Cecil Rhodes and many other luminaries of the time and the insight into their worlds is enlightening.

This is a witty, light-touch biography that is tantalising in its incompleteness.

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### **Bjorn Vang says**

Despite RK being one of my all-time favorite authors and poets, until a few weeks ago, I never knew he wrote an autobiography! What a thrill to get real background information from the horse's mouth, and to learn that he had a much more varied life than I knew. Full of little pearls of wisdom, background on some of the more famous stories and poems, not to mention some relatively unknown ones. Short but sweet.

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### **Peter Dunn says**

It's exactly what it says in the title, not quite an autobiography but some slices of Kipling's life. Not always perfectly remembered but always interesting, insightful and very Kipling – and a little something of the life of Kipling by Kipling is something to treasure.

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### **Leigh says**

I first read this short (122 pages) auto-biography in an anthology of Kipling's shorter works. For years I thought it must have been an excerpt, and hoped I would run across the full-length work. But no. I suspect it may have been cut short by his death, or perhaps edited by his surviving family, who were very protective.

Nonetheless, it's a fascinating read. Among other enjoyable bits, I find his advice on editing to be excellent, and perfectly relevant to modern writers (though as someone else who quoted it notes, beware if you write on an electronic device -- India ink won't help your screen clarity one bit.)

"This leads me to the Higher Editing. Take of well-ground Indian Ink as much as suffices and a camel-hair brush proportionate to the inter-spaces of your lines. In an auspicious hour, read your final draft and consider

faithfully every paragraph, sentence and word, blacking out where requisite. Let it lie by to drain as long as possible. At the end of that time, re-read and you should find that it will bear a second shortening. Finally, read it aloud alone and at leisure. Maybe a shade more brushwork will then indicate or impose itself. If not, praise Allah and let it go, and 'when thou hast done, repent not.' The shorter the tale, the longer the brushwork and, normally, the shorter the lie-by, and vice versa. The longer the tale, the less brush but the longer lie-by. I have had tales by me for three or five years which shortened themselves almost yearly. The magic lies in the Brush and the Ink. For the Pen, when it is writing, can only scratch; and bottled ink is not to compare with the ground Chinese stick. *Experto crede.*"

—Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself*

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### **Simon says**

I really enjoyed this book , RK looking back and vaguely remembering bits of his life in little randomly selected coloured cameos .

The early days in India , the vile and hateful boarding house in England ( where he learned to insulate himself, immersing himself in his imaginings whence his writing ), back to India and OMG just walking into an awesome job as a journalist on a newspaper in Lahore , oh and really getting on with his parents whom he hadn't seen since he was 6 cos they had sent him to board in England !!! Seems amazing but true.

Then starting to write stories for his newspaper, then seamlessly becoming world famous and taking off round the world and living in New England , England , South Africa , Australia ... marrying , having Henry James at his wedding ( one of only 3 guests ! ) Also many of his family sort of automatically became or were at the forefront of either the arts , literature or politics .... quite a charmed life except for the great tragedy ( he lost his only son John in 15 in the war ) which does not get a mention.

Throughout all of this , RK remains completely modest and intimate as an author . The voice is of one who is telling his story - in a slightly quirky manner , with occasional unusual sentence and word choices - across the table with a smile or chuckle. I liked the man and of course you read it wistfully as he is now very long dead and what he is telling you is personal and from the heart .

So a sad book but a real insight into this literary figure who at the turn of the last century was a dominant figure in literature- poesy and short story writing .

Ps: Incidentally I have recently written a critical review on his novel " Kim " . Interesting to note what his mother said after he had finished its writing :

" RK said to his mother as to the plot for Kim " what was good enough for Cervantes was good enough for him . To whom the mother " don't you stand in your wool boots hiding behind Cervantes with me ! You know you couldn't make a plot to save your soul "

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### **Booksnpieces says**

An interesting insight into the mind of this author - more for what he left out of the book than what he put in it.

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### **Rebecca says**

Had to read the autobiography after reading the Jungle Books.

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### **Liz Wager says**

Short but (of course) beautifully written memoir with some brilliant insights on writing

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### **Deborah says**

I enjoyed this look into his life, more of a sketch than a deep autobiography. An interesting look into another time, another place.

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### **Jay McNair says**

The story we tell ourselves later about our lives isn't always the right one. This book is useful as an example of that. What John Bayley calls "one of the most significantly reticent autobiographies ever written." I don't want to write much about it. He has nice style, concrete incident, and occasionally glimpses of emotional resonance. That opening: "My first impression is of daybreak, light and colour and golden and purple fruits at the level of my shoulder.... Our evening walks were by the sea in the shadow of palm-groves." Kipling the personality came across as a bit name-drop-y, but I forget in what way exactly. Crowing a bit. Reminds me of "the boy who swaggers, like the man who swaggers, has little else that he can do. He is a cheap Jack crying his own paltry wares."

Great notes by Thomas Pinney.

I liked the image of young Kipling reciting poetry to himself as he swam in the big rollers off the Ridge.

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