**Nelson Mandela's favourite poem**

Nelson Mandela's birth name was "Rolihlahla," which means "troublemaker."  When he started school, his first teacher gave him the English name "Nelson."  He had no idea why she chose that name for him.

Mandela suffered 27 years in prison before becoming South Africa's president and leading his nation peacefully from apartheid to democracy.  While imprisoned he contracted tuberculosis, survived long bouts of solitary confinement, and was kept from attending his son's funeral.  For several years, he was permitted one visit and letter every six months.

During the long years of his confinement, he came to cherish William Ernest Henley's poem, "Invictus."  He often recited it to fellow inmates; its title was given to a 2009 movie starring Morgan Freeman as Mandela.

Here's the text of Mandela's favourite poem:

[**Invictus**](http://www.poemofquotes.com/quotes/movies/invictus.php)

Out of the night that covers me,

Black as the Pit from pole to pole,

I thank whatever gods may be

For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance

I have not winced nor cried aloud.

Under the bludgeonings of chance

My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears

Looms but the Horror of the shade,

And yet the menace of the years

Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,

How charged with punishments the scroll.

I am the master of my fate:

I am the captain of my soul.

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