

Episode 1.9 What Taylor Swift and Robert Browning Have in Common

Angourie (host)

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which this work was developed and is presented. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

[ukulele theme music]

Angourie (host)

Hello there, and welcome to The Community Library: a podcast, book club and discussion space. I'm your host, Angourie Rice.

So for this minisode, I'm going to talk about one of Robert Browning's poems, specifically *My Last Duchess*. But, before we get into the poem, I would like to tell you about what I'm currently reading.

So at the moment I'm still reading *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. *sigh* When will I ever finish this book? I just finished *Claudine in Paris* about twenty minutes ago, so I'll probably look for another book to read today, but I'm also reading *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, which is our next discussion pick. So I'm taking notes on that, and I hope you're reading along too! It's actually a really quick read, it's only about 90 pages long, and it's got illustrations, and the text is big, and it's easy to understand. If you don't have a copy, then there's actually a free audiobook on YouTube that I will link in the show notes. So this one is super easy to read, and I would encourage you to read along so that we can all talk about it together.

[transition music]

So, I haven't titled this episode yet, 'cause I do that at the end, however I'm guessing it's something weird about Robert Browning and Taylor Swift. So before I get into the Taylor Swift portion of this episode, I would like to talk about Robert Browning first.

Last year in literature class, we studied Robert Browning. Our unit on Robert Browning's poems was a close analysis unit, which means that we had to write essays focussing in on his use of language. So for our assessments, we would compare two poems and we would analyse them together, specifically focussing on the use of language. Another thing that we really focussed on while we were studying Robert Browning's poems was his form of a dramatic monologue, and I'm gonna get into that a bit later, um, because it's very important. But, before I do, I wanna tell you a little bit about Robert Browning.

Robert Browning was born in 1812 and he died in 1889. He was a mid-19th-century poet, and in 1833 he published his first collection of poems, which was called *Pauline: A Fragment of Confession*. This was received terribly by the critics at the time. Everybody hated it, they thought he was a bad writer, and nobody wanted to read any of his work again. A few years later however, he came out with a collection of poems that did very well, and after that he was a pretty acclaimed poet. He married Elizabeth Barret Browning, who was also a poet, and Elizabeth Barret Browning's father didn't approve of the marriage, so they ran away and eloped together and spent a lot of time in

Italy together. So what I know about their relationship and about Elizabeth Barret Browning, I learnt mostly from a small book that I read called *Flush*, by Virginia Woolf. I've talked about it on the podcast before, it's really weird. But it's a biography of Elizabeth Barret Browning and Robert Browning's cocker spaniel. So it's told from the perspective of this cocker spaniel that is living with two poets in the mid-19th-century in Italy. So it's a very weird book, however, I did actually learn quite a bit about Elizabeth Barret Browning and her relationship with Robert Browning.

So they spent a lot of time in Italy, and this is reflected in the poems that we studied, um, a lot of them are set in Italy. Another theme that comes up a lot in his poems is religion and he kind of has this snarky distaste for Christianity, and that comes through quite a bit in his poems. What people have assumed is that he was an atheist, and he was very influenced by Percy Shelley, who was married to Mary Shelley, who wrote *Frankenstein* – Percy Shelley was also a poet – but he was very influenced by Percy Shelley's work and his lifestyle and his beliefs, and so he became an atheist and a vegetarian for some time as well.

Something that you might know Robert Browning from is that he wrote a popularised version of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, which is a fairy tale in which a piper [laughs] I guess – in which a piper, um, lures rats away from the town. I'm sure – I'm sure you know it.

[transition music]

I want to talk about the dramatic monologue. The poems of Robert Browning that we studied, almost all of them were in the form of a dramatic monologue. So what is a dramatic monologue? Well, it is a poem written from the perspective of a character that is not them poet [themselves]. Through this form, the character reveals not only the situation that they're in and the events of the poem, but also what type of person they are, and what kind of morals they hold. When we were studying this unit we read a lot of criticism on Browning's work. One was by Robert Langbaum; he wrote a paper called *The Dramatic Monologue: Sympathy vs. Judgement* in 1957. And I quote from his paper here: "The object is to give facts from within. A certain dramatic understanding of the person speaking, which implies a certain dramatic sympathy." So, what Robert Browning tries to do with his dramatic monologues, is to get the audience to understand and sympathise with a character that they might not usually want to sympathise with. And this is where the idea in the title of the paper comes through; this idea of sympathy vs. judgement. And Robert Langbaum argues that while Browning manipulates us to feel sympathy for these characters that are portrayed in these poems, our judgement and our reason is saying: "Why are you sympathising with this person, they did horrible things." I quote again from the paper here, he says, quote: "The combination of sympathy and judgement makes the dramatic monologue suitable for expressing all kinds of extraordinary points of view." End quote.

This "extraordinary point of view" is something that really intrigued me about Robert Browning's poems, specifically the one that I'm going to focus on today, which is called *My Last Duchess*. This is one of his most famous poems, you might have heard it before? Ah, if you've studied literature, maybe you've studied it before. I'm going to read it here. I'm going to do a dramatic reading, and then I'm going to go in depth and talk about it a bit more. Also, this poem is in the public domain, so I will write it out in the transcription, but I will also leave a link to just the poem itself in the show notes if you want to read it yourself. Here we go.

My Last Duchess

Ferrara – that's the location

*That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat." Such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?— too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—which I have not—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse—
E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without*

*Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!*

So as I was looking back and editing myself reading the poem, I realised that I'm actually not great at reading poems. I would highly recommend for you to also go on to YouTube and google a professional reading the poem so that you can hear how it's actually supposed to sound. I won't link one in the show notes 'cause all the ones I found I didn't like that much because they were all read by old men who sounded really creepy as if they had actually just killed a duchess. Which, I guess, is a good vibe for the poem, and accurate, but I didn't like them, they made me uncomfortable! However, I still recommend that you go and listen to one of them, because it's a lot better than how I read it for you just now. Anyway, let's get on with the episode.

So there's a lot to unpack here! When I first read this poem, I understood not much at all from it, I was pretty confused. I'm just gonna give you, like, a little rundown of what this poem is about. So basically, this poem is told from the perspective of a Duke who is showing a group of people a painting on the wall of his last Duchess. The poem opens with the line: "That's my last Duchess painted on the wall." He then says in the second line: "Looking as if she were alive." So immediately, we can assume that she is dead. This is alluded to throughout the rest of the poem as well. So the story is he's showing these people this beautiful painting of his last Duchess, and as he tells the story of how they fell in love and how gracious and kind and loving she was, he also reveals that he gave commands to kill her. Now, we have evidence of this in this line here: "Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt, / Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without / Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands; / Then all smiles stopped together." So as we can see in these few lines here, he got jealous of her because she was nice to everyone and didn't reserve her smiles just for him, and so he gave commands and she stopped smiling all together. This to me sounds like he got her killed, and this theory is supported amongst a wide group of – of critics.

After he basically reveals to this group of people that he had his duchess killed, we actually learn more about who he's talking to. So he says: "Will't please you rise?" So they're gonna leave, they're gonna leave this room with his Duchess' painting on the wall. Then he says: "We'll meet the company below, then." So they're gonna go back downstairs, and they're gonna talk to the company below. So you can see that he's only brought a select few of people up to show this portrait. Then he says: "The Count your master's known munificence / Is ample warrant that no just pretence / of mine for dowry will be disallowed." So then he goes on to talk about someone's master, and he says that they are very generous. And then he brings up a dowry, which ... I love that this word is in the poem, because it's one of the few words that my name rhymes with. But it's a very old word, so not many people, like, understand it when I say: "Oh, it rhymes with dowry," people are like: "What?" Dowry is an old word for a sum of money that the father of a bride would

give to the groom when they got married. So, it was kind of like a present saying: "Here, take my daughter, and take this money, too." So from this, we understand that the Duke is also negotiating a dowry. He goes on to say: "Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed / At starting, is my object." So through these few lines, he's saying: "I know your master is very generous, so I'm excited for this dowry that I'm gonna get. Although, although, the daughter, of course, was my first object that I always wanted."

If we just take the story back to the beginning; he's showing a group of people who are organising his dowry a painting of a Duchess that he had murdered, and then he's gonna go back downstairs and marry a new woman who is gonna become his new Duchess!

Once I deciphered the story of this Duke and how he had his Duchess killed, I was disgusted, because it's a story of a really horrible man doing a really horrible thing to a woman. It made me very uncomfortable and upset, but it's told from his perspective, which is so odd because he sees into his mind, and we see how he works, and how it's all so flippant for him. And it's very unsettling, especially the way that he exercises so much power and control over her. We see this power that he has, and his jealousy, and in the end she ends up dead, and he ends up starting the cycle again with a new beautiful Duchess and a new sum of money.

[transition music]

So I just wanna go a bit into the language and the form of this poem. As we spoke about before, this is in the form of a dramatic monologue, so it's a character speaking. It's told in rhyming couplets, so the rhyme scheme is AA BB. Two lines rhyme with one another, and then the next two lines rhyme with each other as well. Almost all of the rhymes in this poem are true rhymes. So that means: wall, call, hands, stands, and not wall, cold, which almost rhymes but not quite. So every rhyme is true, and I think this form of the rhyming couplets and the true rhymes really shows who the Duke is in his speech, and what kind of person he is and what kind of power he holds. These rhyming couplets are very bold and strong and aggressive, and you can tell that he's really confident in the way that he speaks.

Also with the way that sentences end in the middle of a stanza. So for example, the second line is "Looking as if she were alive." Full-stop, and then he says: "I call". He knows that he has the power to end a sentence in the middle of his line, and the whole group will still keep listening to him because he holds so much power over them. It also shows how much he just wants to keep talking, really, and he doesn't want to stop.

Another thing about the language is that he takes away the Duchess' voice, you know, it's all about him. It's all about the Duke. And even though it is about the Duchess, and the Duchess is in the title, the title is "*My Last Duchess*", so even in the title, even though the poem is kind of about her, the Duke still has this possessiveness over her. He still owns her, essentially. She never speaks.

Whenever he's talking about her, he never recalls what she said, it's always: "She did this, she did that, and I felt jealous." Even the artist who painted the painting gets a bit of speech in the poem, but the Duchess doesn't, and I think that's really important, because it shows that the Duke is willing to have this long rambling talk about himself, and he's willing to add in bits of what some other guy said, but he will never give the Duchess a voice, because he needs power over her. So not only do we see this in the way that the Duke speaks and the way that he tells the story, but also the actions that he performs in the poem. So he says, in brackets in the first – ah – ten lines of the poem, he says: "(since none puts by / The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)". So this means

that the painting of the Duchess has a curtain drawn over it, and he is the only one in his house who is allowed to touch that curtain. He doesn't allow anybody else to draw the curtain to show her image, only he has the power to do that. So he literally has power over when her image appears, and over when he allows people to look at her and think about her. And I think that that is such a powerful message that he's sending, you know: "Nobody can touch this curtain except me, and you are only getting to see her and know about her story under my circumstances, and I'm gonna tell the story the way I want to." So he has this obnoxious and revolting amount of power over her image.

Another thing that we learn about the Duke through this poem, and who he is in his language, is his aristocratic importance. So you know that he comes from an old, rich family. And we know this from this line here: "as if she ranked / My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name / With anybody's gift." So he's saying here: "How dare she take a branch from a cherry orchard from a poor peasant and treat it equally with the gift of power and importance in society due to my name and being married to me." So obviously sees himself far above everybody else because of the name he inherited, and because of the money that he inherited.

Again, this says something about the power that he has, you know? Not only is it power that he has built up in his brain, but it's power he's inherited, and for nine hundred years, Dukes with this name have probably been killing their Duchesses. And we can assume this because of the cyclical nature of this poem, right? It ends with him organising to marry another woman. It's so unsettling!

[transition music]

So while I was thinking about Robert Browning and *My Last Duchess*, and specifically the form of a dramatic monologue. I was thinking: "Okay, so what is the closest thing to a dramatic monologue today? Do we still have them in our culture and our literature and our art today? Do we still have some sort of form of a dramatic monologue?" And my mind immediately went to a very odd place, and that was Taylor Swift's song *Blank Space*. Now I don't know if you've heard this song, or if you've seen the music video, or if you hate Taylor Swift, or if you love her ... However, she came out with this song in 2014 and I loved it, like, I was a massive, massive, massive fan. And the video – the video for *Blank Space* I also loved. And let me just paint you a picture of the video, and I'll link it in the show notes so you can watch it now or later, but I'll just give you the gist of the story of the music video.

So we have Taylor Swift in a beautiful mansion, and a handsome young man comes along, and they fall in love. And she's dancing around in beautiful dresses, and he's in a beautiful suit, and everything's wonderful. And they're riding horses and running across fields ... Until they're having a picnic, and she sees him smiling at something on his phone. She gets jealous, they have a fight. We see her painting a picture of him and then we see her destroying that picture, ripping it to shreds, burning it. She cuts his clothes, she burns his clothes, she destroys his phone. And then, at the very end, she destroys his beautiful car with a golf club, and he looks like he's dead, or poisoned, or something? But basically, he runs away in his car, and she's gotten rid of him, and she's ruined his life, and she's still in this beautiful mansion. And then at the very, very end of the music video, another man drives up in a beautiful sports car, and another man comes into the mansion, and she looks at him, and we know the story's gonna start again.

So when I was thinking about *Blank Space*, I was thinking ... first of all, this is a dramatic monologue, right? Because the song is a satire, and you can hear Taylor Swift talk about this in interviews. She

says that the song was written in response to how the media perceives her. She was sick of the media saying she's a twisted, manipulative girl, she'll ruin these boys' lives ... like, she lives in this mansion and she's all horrible ... And she was sick of this – this image that the media was selling, essentially, of her, and so she wrote this song as a satire, saying: "Look at how bizarre this is, you think that this is who I am, and that is a weird and twisted way of looking at me."

So what I get from this is that she wrote a dramatic monologue. She wrote a song from the perspective of a character who was unlikable, and yet you still sympathised with them, while also reserving judgement. I believe that Taylor Swift and Robert Browning have a lot in common in terms of *My Last Duchess* and *Blank Space*.

I came up with this theory in my mind that *Blank Space* was indeed a dramatic monologue, and I was going to argue for that, essentially. And then I remembered the video, and I was thinking: "Hang on a second, this video is basically *My Last Duchess*." In both of them you have an obsessive lover who eventually – well, in Browning's case – kills the object of affection because they're jealous, and in Taylor Swift's case, destroys the car of the object of affection because she's jealous. And then at the very end, the cycle begins again! And you, as the audience, have this sense of foreboding because you know what's gonna happen.

I googled it and I found two other people who have written blog posts comparing *My Last Duchess* and *Blank Space* by Taylor Swift. I will link both of these posts in the show notes, because both of them informed the argument and this episode. And the first one is from a blog called British Literature, 1700 to 1900, a course blog. So I'm guessing this blog was an assignment of sorts. This person has written a really great and interesting analysis and comparison of *My Last Duchess* and *Blank Space* the music video. The other blog post that I found was from a blog called *Later English Literature*, and the writer says that they studied Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess*, and how it reminded them so much of the *Blank Space* music video.

And then when I asked you guys on Instagram what Robert Browning and Taylor Swift had in common, quite a few people mentioned the parallels between *My Last Duchess* and *Blank Space*. So it seems that a lot of people knew about this already and I'm just late to the party, but I still wanted to do a whole episode on it. But I do want to delve deeper into this theory that *My Last Duchess* and *Blank Space* are very, very similar. I want to compare them even more.

[transition music]

One thing that I want to focus on is how they both display toxic relationships, and how in both cases, it's a matter of possession. And we see this specifically with the Duke. There's a whole section where he talks about how the Duchess acted. He talks about how she was, and I quote: "too easily impressed." The Duchess would smile at everyone, and she would take gifts from everyone and treat them all the same. She would give the same smile to everyone – the same thanks to everyone who brought her gifts, whether it was the gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name, or the gift of a branch of cherries from a peasant, I assume. So this made the Duke incredibly jealous, and this idea of jealousy is also present in *Blank Space*. She says, and I quote, in the song: "Oh my god, who is she? I get drunk on jealousy." So although the Duke never acknowledges his jealousy, or he never says explicitly he was jealous, he is upset that he is not given special treatment, and he's upset that she's not treating him with the same importance that everybody else has his whole life. Of course this jealousy and this toxicity and this desire to possess ends really, really badly for everyone involved.

Another thing that I want to bring up is the idea of – of power and importance, right? So – so we've talked about this a lot, but the Duke says that he has the gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name, and in *Blank Space*, Taylor Swift says: "I could show you incredible things". So they're both promising this importance, and this – this glamour and riches to give to their lovers, and all they want in return is utter devotion for the end of time. Not too much to ask, right?

So again, we have this similarity with both of them, where they both have an environment and atmosphere of glamour and wealth, and I think that's really, really important, because the setting of this music video is this beautiful mansion. And she's got white horses and gazebos and picnic blankets and fountains, like it's – it's gorgeous. And everything has glitter and sparkles and glass and gold. Meanwhile, the Duke at the very end of the poem, he says: "Notice Neptune, though, / Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, / Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!" So we get a sense, at the very end, of his environment, that this is a room of treasures that he has paintings and sculptures that are "rarities", and that are displays of his power and his wealth and his importance, and that is mirrored in the environment of the video of *Blank Space*.

One similarity that I think is perhaps the most important one is the painting. So of course *My Last Duchess* is all about the painting of the Duchess, right? He's showing this group of people this beautiful painting. So we know that the painting of the Duchess was done while she was alive, and now all that remains of it is a memory of the woman that he killed because she didn't obey him in the way that he wanted, which is very sinister. And it remains as a display of power, and especially the way that he owns her image, right? It's in this room of treasures and rarities and stuff that he owns. Meanwhile, in *Blank Space* in the music video, you see her painting a portrait of this beautiful young man, and she hangs it up in a hallway with other paintings of men who look very similar. So Taylor Swift, or the character that she has created of herself in this video, also has this room of treasures of sorts, in which she displays the men that she's – in air quotations – "conquered", or that she "owns", or that she seduced and now possesses. Here, we have the same imagery of a painting! Like they're – it's the same thing!

I guess the difference in the music video is that she – she destroys the painting afterwards. She rips it to shreds with a knife, and we see the man walking through the hallway and realising that she's defaced all of these paintings in some way. One of them has red crosses on the eyes, one of them has been burnt, she slashes his with a knife. So I would put forward the theory that this character's decision to deface the paintings – but still leave them there and not get rid of them – is very similar to what the Duke does to the Duchess. Even though he grew jealous and he killed her, and even though Taylor Swift grew jealous and sent him away, they both still have these physical representations of memories hanging up in their house to remind them of the time that they had, and to still have control over. And I think that the symbolism of this painting is so important in both texts.

Before I go, I want to include one more point of comparison that I think is very important, and that is the difference of this story being told by a man vs by a woman. So, in *My Last Duchess*, the protagonist is the Duke, and he's the one who gets jealous and who is obsessive and crazy and clingy and eventually kills his Duchess. On the other hand, we have Taylor Swift, who is a woman, who has created this character who is obsessive and crazy and clingy and jealous. Now, I don't know where the inspiration for *My Last Duchess* came from, but what we do know is where the inspiration for *Blank Space* came from, and that was the way that the media wanted to portray Taylor Swift.

I think it's very important to think about how personal and romantic relationships, when it comes to men and women are scrutinised in the media, and how they're represented in art. With the Duke in *My Last Duchess*, while we might not have much context for the poem and – and Robert Browning, we can look at the context for the Duke, and we can see that he's still rich, he's still respected among his peers and among people he doesn't know. He still commands power in a room – on the other hand, *Blank Space* was created in response to people not taking Taylor Swift seriously, to the media saying that she was crazy and obsessive and was going to ruin men's lives. And the Duke in the poem doesn't get that – not that we see. But the impression that we get is that they're not worried that he's going to ruin the daughter's life. They're not worried about that at all! In fact, they're going to go downstairs and negotiate the dowry.

So I think it is worth looking at the gender stereotypes that play within this narrative, because the narrative is essentially the same, however it's perceived very differently and experienced very differently by men and women. The Duke in *My Last Duchess*, that is his story and he wears it proudly, whereas Taylor Swift had to reclaim that story to get that power back.

[transition music]

So in conclusion ... this has been a weird episode. In conclusion, I think that dramatic monologues are still very relevant to popular culture today. I think that *My Last Duchess* and *Blank Space* are quite similar, and I think that that shows that maybe even if we're not conscious of it, these narratives that were created over a hundred and fifty years ago still permeate the art that we create today. And I think that that's actually – in some ways that's really bad – but in some ways I think it's – it's fascinating that, you know, if you think of Shakespeare and – and Romeo and Juliet, that story is hundreds of years old and is still present today. Yeah, I just think that's really cool and interesting. This poem is a hundred and seventy-seven years old. It was written a hundred and seventy-seven years ago, however, it's still an incredible construction of character and narrative in a very short form, and so is *Blank Space*, and I think that they both have really interesting use of language and story-telling that has so many hidden things that we can unlock.

So in conclusion, I guess my question to you is: Do you know of any more dramatic monologues in today's culture and today's art scene? But please let me know if you think you've found another dramatic monologue, and maybe it's very similar to another one of Robert Browning's poems, who knows? Another question that I want to ask is: Do you enjoy reading poetry? I think poetry has kind of had a comeback recently with the rise of Rupi Kaur and this idea of Instagram poetry, which I don't think is a bad thing. I think it's really exciting that poetry is becoming new and accessible. Yeah, let me know if you enjoyed this very odd episode. I had lots of fun creating it – it was so much fun to just, like, write notes on both Robert Browning and Taylor Swift who at first glance seem worlds apart. Let me know if you wanna listen to more episodes like this. I would love to look for more things in – in quotations – “classic” literature that are relevant to the art that we consume today. I think that would be really interesting.

One last thing before I go, I just wanted to say thank you to all of the lovely messages that I got about my last episode on re-reading books. On Instagram [antipodean.books](#) sent me a really lovely message talking about re-reading Jane Austen and also being scared to re-read *Emil and the Detectives* because they're worried that it will let them down. So, it makes me really happy to know that people are relating to the episode, that is just really nice to hear.

I also saw that a lot of people commented on the post about *The Little Prince* saying that it's their favourite book, that they're really, really excited to read it! So I'm also excited for you to listen to the episode, it will be up in two weeks' time, so if you haven't read it yet you still have some time. It's very short, very easy to read, so I'm very excited to talk about that one. And finally, I'd also like to – um – say thank you to everyone who's rated the podcast on iTunes and left reviews, it's really lovely and it helps the podcast out a lot, so thank you so much.

[ukulele theme music]

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Oh my gosh. I just wanna point out something that I literally just found out that is really freaky. Taylor Swift was born on December 12th, 1989, and Robert Browning died on December 12th, 1889.

[X-files theme song]