

Listening Guide- Episode 1

“My Last Duchess”- Robert Browning

“Poetry Supplement”

1. Just for clarification- The Victorian period is considered somewhere around _____ to 1900.
2. John Ruskin famously said, “that the real test of a community is not how much wealth it is producing but what kind of _____ it is producing.”
3. Robert Browning _____ in Camberwell.
4. What makes great _____ is the exact same thing as what makes great plays, or great novels or great music. They’re voicing ideas about the world, spotlighting experiences we struggle with, saying things we’ve seen but we can’t _____ something we might’ve noticed but didn’t think about.
5. Great poems are not about the _____; they are about us, the reader.
6. The speaker of the poem is not the _____ of the poem.
7. Torvald isn’t going to murder his wife, but he most definitely has reduced her to a work of _____, she’s a treasure, something comparable to a portrait on a wall that can be brought out and admired, but then put back on the shelf.
8. In the poem by Browning, the speaker of the poem is a Renaissance _____ from Italy, supposedly.
9. We do know that Browning was well traveled and in 1838 spent two months in Northern _____ studying Italian history and legends.
10. This may or may not be the right town or the right Duke, but it’s an interesting hypothesis that the Duchess in the story could be Lucrezia, Cosimo de Medici’s younger _____ who was married to Alfonso of the Este family.
11. The first hurdle in definitely declaring this poem to be about Lucrezia de Medici- is that there is no such _____ that we know of, and there is no such famous painter as Fra Pandolf.
12. This Duke is the metaphor of a familiar _____.
13. “That’s my last _____ painted on the wall, looking as if she were alive.”

14. Well, Fra is short for _____, so this is a Catholic monk or priest.
15. A _____ painting had to be done in one day, like with Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel because when the plaster dries you're done.
16. Basically, he's saying that Fra Pandolf, on purpose, captured a very specific _____ expression in the face of his ex-wife.
17. "_____ must never hope to reproduce the faint half-flush that dies along her throat."
18. The way he talks to the guy he's talking to is really _____.
19. That last sentence, is a _____ sentence. "Sir, 'twas all one!" It's very short and the purpose of it is to highlight a very important idea.
20. "E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose never to _____."
21. The tone shifts here. He's getting _____.
22. She refused to be taught, but she also refused to be _____ as in to be made smaller.
23. First to confirm, she did not _____ on him by the way, and it doesn't even seem like she hated him.
24. "This grew; I gave commands; then all _____ stopped together."
25. He wanted to brag on his omnipotence- it's not a coincidence that he's showing off another piece of art of his- this one is a Roman God, _____.
26. Browning has created a _____ for his poem. He started and he ended with two pieces of art.
27. Neptune has restrained the _____ in exactly the same way as the Duke has restrained his wife.
28. In order to destroy his wife, he _____ her for all eternity.
29. A great writer can make things simple, like the simplistic understanding that this is an excellent portrait of a _____.
30. Today's take away: stop reading for information but read looking for the _____!