James Krafft

English 12 Communications

Dr. Griffin

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"My Last Duchess"

Robert Browning

That’s my last duchess painted on the wall,A

That is my last wife’s painting on the wall

Looking as if she were alive. I callA

That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf’s handsB

The piece was a mystery, now: Fra Pandolf’s hands

Worked busily a day, and there she stands.B

He worked hard on the painting, now it’s just there

Will’t please you sit and look at her? I saidC

“Frà Pandolf” by design, for never readC

Strangers like you that pictured countenance,D

Strangers like you that pictured a facial expression

The depth and passion of its earnest glance,D

the deepness and passion that the painting has

But to myself they turned (since none puts byE

The painting does not look the same

The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)E

And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,F

They would ask him how he felt, if they dare too

How such a glance came there; so, not the firstF

Its not the first time

Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, ’twas notG

Are you to sit there and ask this therefore it was not.

Her husband’s presence only, called that spotG

He claimed her

Of joy into the Duchess’ cheek: perhapsH

Of joy into the Duchess’ cheek: perhaps

Frà Pandolf chanced to say “Her mantle lapsH

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“Over my lady’s wrist too much,” or “PaintI

“Over my lady’s wrist too much,” or “Paint

“Must never hope to reproduce the faintI

“Must never hope to reproduce the faint

“Half-flush that dies along her throat”: such stuffJ

“Half-flush that dies along her throat”: such stuff

Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enoughJ

For calling up that spot of joy. She hadK

For asking her to marry him

A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,K

She had a good heart, soon to make him glad

Too easily impressed; she liked whate’erL

She was easily impressed and liked anything

She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.L

She was very beautiful

Sir, ’twas all one! My favor at her breast,M

It is all one, my favor at her chest

The dropping of the daylight in the West,M

The sun setting

The bough of cherries some officious foolN

The cherry branch of someone

Broke in the orchard for her, the white muleN

Broke in the garden for her, with a white horse

She rode with round the terrace—all and eachO

She rode around on the horse

Would draw from her alike the approving speech,O

Would portray her approving speech

Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thankedP

Somehow—I know not how—as if she rankedP

My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old nameQ

With anybody’s gift. Who’d stoop to blameQ

This sort of trifling? Even had you skillR

In speech—which I have not—to make your willR

Quite clear to such an one, and say, “Just thisS

“Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,S

“Or there exceed the mark”—and if she letT

Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly setT

Her wits to yours, forsooth, and make excuse,U

—E’en then would be some stooping; and I chooseU

Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,V

Whene’er I passed her; but who passed withoutV

Whenever I passed her; but who passed without

Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;B

She kept smiling, so he gave the command

Then all smiles stopped together. There she standsB

As if alive. Will’t please you rise? We’ll meetW

The company below, then. I repeat,W

The Count your master’s known munificenceD

Is ample warrant that no just pretenseD

Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;X

Though his fair daughter’s self, as I avowedX

At starting, is my object. Nay we’ll goY

Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,Y

Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,Z

Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!Z

I liked the way the rhyme scheme was set up. Some of the words I did not understand but after looking them up it was clearer to me. But I still didn’t understand the true meaning of this poem. This poem was really long, and it was boring to read.