**MY LAST DUCHESS BY BROWNING – the story of the poem.**

* The poem is set during the late [Italian Renaissance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Renaissance).
* The [speaker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrator) (presumably the Duke of Ferrara) is giving the emissary of the family of his prospective new wife (presumably a third or fourth since Browning could have easily written 'second' but did not do so) a tour of the artworks in his home.
* He draws a curtain to reveal a painting of a woman, explaining that it is a portrait of his late wife; he invites his guest to sit and look at the painting.
* As they look at the portrait of the late Duchess, the Duke describes her happy, cheerful and flirtatious nature, which had displeased him.
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* There was a strong suspicion of poisoning. The Duke then sought the hand of [Barbara](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_of_Austria), eighth daughter of [the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_I%2C_Holy_Roman_Emperor) and the sister of the Count of [Tyrol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_of_Tyrol). The count was in charge of arranging the marriage. Nikolaus Madruz, was his courier ( messenger). Madruz is presumably the silent listener in the poem.