

Tess Coward

Dear Taylor Swift,

I am reaching out to you to inform you of the burden you have placed on my life. I am constantly ridiculed, harassed, judged and dismissed because of my undying devotion to you and your music. I have been a devout fan since I was a young girl. I have witnessed genre changes, total physical transformations and scandal after scandal - all of which you handled with grace and poise. I have accepted all of your outfit choices. I went as far as to buy neon Wayfarers. I got bangs, I grew them out, I cut off all my hair, I got a perm. As I've gotten older I have had 6 different personalities and wardrobes coordinating with your newest album. Lover era was really hard on me, Taylor. Justice doesn't sell womens mediums. I emulated every trend you created and never questioned a thing.

I hate to bring this up, but I watched you date man after man. I loved them with you. I rooted for the villains and the heroes all the same. I tried, repeatedly, to get John Mayer listed as a registered sex offender. I sat out the Jonas Brothers concert as a kid while all of my friends sat in the front row and had the time of their lives. I've still never even seen camp rock. I lived in constant fear that when you did meet the one, your music would stop coming. I pretended that I cared about Calvin Harris, just like you did. The Harry Styles era was hard for me. His hair looked so greasy I lost sleep worrying about your pores. When you decided you only like British men, I did what I had to. London was a blast, but I missed my family and had to come home empty handed.

As if the humiliation and whiplash of backing you and imitating you through various questionable eras, hairstyles, boyfriends and outfits wasn't enough, I also have to live the

constant Taylor -Swiftification of everyday encounters in my mind. Thanks to you, a mere smile from a coffee barista spirals into the melodic lines of our future love story. I can no longer have a simple crush on a boy. Events in my simple life have molded into the storylines of your discography, treating every song as a chapter that I must fulfill. I will be dating the most insufferable man on the planet singing about how they make me want to spin around in a sparkly dress. I speak in metaphors and prose. I have never felt a small emotion since your music graced my ears. I can turn spilled milk into a family tragedy with the right curation of your music. I have spent night after night sobbing over boys whose last names I never knew, because you made me.

Financially, you are catastrophic. I bought every album on vinyl. I do not have a record player. I buy all of the merchandise your team releases, and I wear it, cautiously, in my day to day life. Please stop printing your face on ping pong balls and selling them in packs of 6 for \$50. I don't know what to do with all of them. I have paid your bills for years. I have all of your albums on Spotify and Apple music, just so you can receive double compensation. I listened to 507 hours of your music last year. And what has this left me with? Heartbreak, frustration and an empty wallet. I am exhausted, Taylor. I want you to think about the things you do before you do them.

And now, to address the elephant in the room, your tour tickets. Do you know how belittling it is to sit in a virtual queue for 6 hours? I watched a gray emoticon man stride down two inches of screen like my life depended on it. I skipped class. I skipped work. Gripped my phone, open to the glitching app that has the audacity to call itself *Ticketmaster*? No ticket has ever been so amateur. Billions of us waited for you to speak out. We needed a sign from above that no, just because you didn't get them in the first 5 hours doesn't mean you should give up. I

know you were occupied watching the zeros in your bank account multiply but we, the people putting them there, were in the trenches, blood soaked. But I succeeded, Taylor. I got the tickets for me and my sisters. We will be close enough to see your dagger eyeliner and every individual sequin on your skirts. I will baptize myself in your sweat. Yet, I have to ask myself, at what cost? Could those hours spent in line have been spent making a difference in someone's life? Could the 507 hours of time spent connecting with you through tiny speakers have been spent with the ones I love? I'll never get that time back, like ever.

I have found myself in quite the predicament. I could call it all off right now. I could protest your music. I could make sure the words "Taylor Swift" never left my lips again. But you would find a way. You would be on every billboard. The radio would still turn on and convince me I simply need to shake it off. If that wasn't enough, there's social media. I'd see your award red carpet looks and be instantly entranced. I'd open Facebook to see that crazy aunt Linda has recently discovered your song "love story" and she needs someone to help set it as her ringtone. I also have the others to worry about. The Swiftie community does not take ourselves lightly. They would find me, a retired, cynical ex-fan and kidnap me in my sleep like a troubled youth to a wilderness exploration camp. Nobody would see me for an entire year.

But the truth is, blondie, I'm nothing without you. My bank account will be empty no matter what due to my utter lack of financial planning. The 507 hours I spend a year listening to you will just be spent on the Hamilton soundtrack, for which I would just be ridiculed more intensely. If I weren't so invested in your relationships, I'd probably have to pay attention to which model Pete Davidson was last seen with at In-n-Out. So let them make fun of my rainbow tie dyed joggers. I am a swiftie and it's no longer something I can hide from. Taylor, your influence on my life has been treacherous, but I, I, I, like it.

Love,

Swiftie Tessie