Title: Not My Troy, Not My Heaven

Synopsis:
In this episode of Alchemy Tim and LeeAnna explore the magnetic (and often delusional) pull of charismatic figures – celebrity influencers, social activists, dreamy actors – who become mythologized in the minds of admirers. Using W.B. Yeats's poems *No Second Troy* and *He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven* as a springboard, the podcast examines what happens when someone falls not for a person, but for the *idea* of them. The heartbreak isn't just romantic – it's existential. Think: modern Maud Gonne with a ring light and a sponsored skincare routine.

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Podcasts (part 2) – 24 minutes:
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Discussion Questions
Use these questions to spark conversation and reflection in the classroom:

- Why are we so easily drawn to idealized versions of people we don't really know?

- How does social media make it easier to fall for the idea of someone rather than who they actually are?

- What does Yeats mean by "Why should I blame her"? Is he taking responsibility – or dodging it?

- Can admiration for someone still be meaningful if it's based on illusion?

- What are the emotional consequences of projecting our fantasies onto real people?

- Have you ever experienced "celebrity crush disillusionment"? What changed?

- How can this theme be used to build a plot twist or emotional turning point in fiction?

Writer's Prompts
Creative exercises to help students apply the themes of the topic:

- **Prompt 1:** The Influencer Mirage. Your protagonist is obsessed with a high-profile activist whose life seems perfect. Then they win a contest to spend a day with them – and discover a person entirely different from their online persona.

- **Prompt 2:** Swipe Left on Perfection. A dating app promises "ideal matches," but one character is matched with someone they've followed and admired for years. At first, it feels like fate... until it doesn't.

- **Prompt 3:** Speechless. Write a scene where a character meets their idol in person for the first time – and is hit with the awkward realization that this person is emotionally distant, uninterested, or even cruel.

- **Prompt 4:** Modern Troy. A character writes a poetic, angry rant about their former partner, blaming them for being unreachable, unfixable, and impossibly radiant. And then it's stolen, published and goes viral. Write the experience of the character or their ex.

- **Prompt 5:** Troy Was a Lie. After a bad breakup, your character realizes they were never in love with the person – only with their imagined "greatness." Write the final message they never send.

Class Activities
These activities will help expand on the themes of the topic:

- **Group Discussion**: Break into pairs. Each student must describe a fictional character, or parasocial person, they once admired but now see differently. Was it love – or projection?

- **Design Exercise**: Create a side-by-side "Instagram vs. Reality" storyboard for a fictional influencer. One side shows their curated posts. The other reveals what's actually happening off-camera.

- **Debate**: "Is it ever ethical to build your identity around someone else's public persona?" Split the class and argue it out. Bonus points for sarcasm.

- **Collaborative Story-Building**: Each group invents a character who is admired from afar (celebrity, YouTuber, politician). Then, another group must write a short scene revealing their flaws. Combine the two for a deliciously disappointing love story.

Closing note from the Podcasters, Tim & LeeAnna
Ah, idealization. The universal human hobby of polishing a stranger's image until it shines brighter than a freshly filtered sunset over Santorini. But as Yeats knew – and as your protagonist is about to find out – there's nothing quite like the crash of fantasy meeting flesh-and-blood reality. So go forth, dear writers. Break some hearts. Pop a few delusions. And for heaven's sake, remember: not every shimmering Troy is worth the fire.