Taylor Swift's 'Reputation': All the gossip about Joe Alwyn, Kanye West and Tom Hiddleston

In the preface of her two Reputation-themed magazines, which feature photos, poetry and hand-written lyrics to celebrate the release of her sixth album, Swift lamented the inevitable news stories that guess at the targets of her lyrics.

“When this album comes out, gossip blogs will scour the lyrics for the men they can attribute to each song, as if the inspiration for music is as simple and basic as a paternity test,” she wrote. “There will be slideshows of photos backing up each incorrect theory, because it’s 2017 and if you didn’t see a picture of it, it couldn’t have happened right?”

Yet, even with its controversy-winking title, Reputation is probably the least-gossipy release of Swift’s career. Instead of an array of songs potentially referencing different ex-lovers, the majority of Reputation is dedicated to a single subject, whom Swift is still (as far as fans know) happily dating.

The allusions to Swift’s past dramas are few and far between, and when they do show up on Reputation, they make for some of the album’s very best songs. Swift steers clear of Katy Perry and squad drama and bashing her exes, keeping her apologies short, and list of enemies shorter.

More: Taylor Swift, pop princess, wins song of the year at the CMA Awards

Swift is a master at chronicling her soured relationships, with many of her finest songs memorializing (and sometimes flaming) her exes. So what happens when Swift writes an album about a person she’s still into? That’s the story of Reputation, and the British actor Joe Alwyn, whom Swift has been spotted with over the past year, is the man at its center.

“Oh, 25 years old / Oh, how were you to know,” Swift sings on Dancing With Our Hands Tied, referencing Alwyn’s age at the time she wrote the album (he's 26 now). The “ocean blue eyes” Swift sings about on Gorgeous almost certainly belong to Alwyn, a motif that repeats on Dancing With Our Hands Tied (“Deep blue, but you painted me golden”) and Delicate (“Oh damn, never seen that color blue”). Swift also mentions his British roots in Gorgeous when she sings, “You should take it as a compliment that I got drunk and made fun of the way you talk,” calling herself his “American queen” on King Of My Heart and teasing, “Do the girls back home touch you like I do?” on Delicate.

And beyond songs like Gorgeous and Delicate that deliberately reference Alwyn, Swift spends the majority of Reputation lusting after, falling in love with and eventually pledging her loyalty to her new beau, the most time she’s ever spent on a romantic upswing on one of her albums.

Taylor Swift and Kanye West (and her squad)

Swift came out of the gate swinging on Reputation's lead single Look What You Made Me Do, with lyrics like "I don’t like your little games / Don’t like your tilted stage" that seemed directed at West, the rapper who reignited their feud when he unceremoniously included Swift's name in his Famous lyrics.

With an album title like Reputation, fans speculated whether the entire album would be a vindictive screed aimed at Swift's enemies. Turns out, Look What You Made Me Do was a red herring, and West barely makes an appearance in the album's lyrics, save for one other song in which Swift laughing at the rapper as she dances on his grave.

The album's third-to-last track, This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things, is a postmortem of Swift's 1989 era, when she partied with her squad members on Instagram and was buddy-buddy with West, before 2016 arrived and Swift's public persona took a hit.

"It was so nice throwing big parties / Jump into the pool from the balcony," Swift begins, remembering "feeling so Gatsby for that whole year" before she gets to the chorus, singing with a smirk in her voice, "This is why we can’t have nice things, darling / Because you break them."

Then, it's West's turn. "It was so nice being friends again / There I was giving you a second chance / But you stabbed me in the back while shaking my hand," she sings, referencing their fateful phone call about Famous that West's camp recorded and later posted to smear her as duplicitous.

"But I’m not the only friend you’ve lost lately / If only you weren’t so shady," she continues, raising a toast to her real friends, her mother, and then eventually to West. "And here’s to you, 'cause forgiveness is a nice thing to do," she says, before breaking down in giggles, saying, "I can’t even say it with a straight face!"

This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things may be an enjoyable slice of pettiness, but the album's crown jewel of gossip is Getaway Car, which sees Swift in full storyteller mode as she chronicles using one doomed relationship to escape another.

With lyrics like “I wanted to leave him, I needed a reason” and "With three of us, honey, it’s a sideshow," the song seems to reference the several months in 2016 when Swift parted ways with Calvin Harris and dated Tom Hiddleston immediately after, before eventually splitting with him too. To follow the song's metaphor, Hiddleston is the getaway car driver who whisks Swift away from another man ("Well he was running after us / I was screaming ‘Go go go!'").

In the end, she leaves him too, escaping with the fortune and singing, "I put the money in a bag and stole the keys / That was the last time you ever saw me."

Swift may not want fans to linger on the gossip behind her songs, but when it's as wonderfully told as Getaway Car, honestly, who can blame them?