



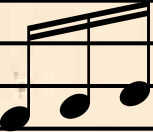







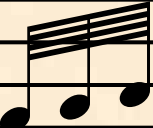

# *Behind the Lyrics*

a book of music analysis'



Teneshia M. Evans  
Christopher Lee Grogan  
Megan Welch Harris  
Arriane Arenas Lintag  
Hannah Goins Yavuz

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 *“Brand New Me”*  
by Alicia Keys

It's been a while  
I'm not who I was before  
You look surprised  
Your words don't burn me anymore  
Been meanin' to tell ya  
But I guess it's clear to see  
Don't be mad  
It's just a brand new kinda me  
Can't be bad  
I found a brand new kinda free

Careful with your ego  
He's the one that we should blame  
Had to grab my heart back  
God knows something had to change  
I thought that you'd be happy  
I found the one thing I need  
Why you mad?  
It's just a brand new kinda me  
[another version has some additional lines:  
“Never bad  
I found a brand new kinda free.  
Ooh...”]

[one version:] It took a long, long time to get here  
[another version:] It took a long, long road to get here  
It took a brave, brave girl to try  
It took one too many excuses, one too many lies  
Don't be surprised, don't be surprised

[one version:] If I talk a little louder  
[another version:] If I walk a little taller  
If I speak up when you're wrong  
If I walk a little taller  
I've been under you too long  
If you notice that I'm different  
Don't take it personally  
Don't be mad  
It's just a brand new kinda me  
[another version doesn't have these additional lines:  
“That ain't bad  
I found a brand new kinda free.”]

Ooh, it took a long, long road to get here

It took a brave, brave girl to try  
I've taken one too many excuses, one too many lies  
Don't be surprised, oh, said, you look surprised

Hey, if you were a friend  
You'd wanna get to know me again  
If you were worth the while  
You'd be happy to see me smile  
I'm not expecting sorry  
I'm too busy finding myself  
I got this  
I found me, I found me, yeah

I don't need your opinion  
I'm not waiting for your “OK”  
I'll never be perfect,  
But at least now I'm brave  
I know my heart is open  
I can finally breathe  
Don't be mad  
It's just a brand new kinda free  
That ain't bad  
I found a brand new kinda me  
Don't be mad  
[one version:] It's a brand new time for me  
[another version:] It's just a brand new time for me



Initially, I thought this song was about a woman coming into her own, who finally found the strength and courage to walk away from a broken relationship. I gathered from the lyrics that she had felt a certain type of way about the relationship for quite some time and wanted to move on, but was afraid. It also seemed that during the relationship, she didn't feel as if she was good enough for her lover, but after choosing to end things she realized that she no longer needed his validation for anything.

From my interpretation, the song evoked, hurt, pain and sadness, but after the woman decided to let go, it evoked freedom; she spoke almost as if a weight or burden had been lifted from her shoulders. She said, "I don't need your opinion, I'm not waiting for your "OK", I'll never be perfect, But at least now I'm brave, I know my heart is open, I can finally breathe, Don't be mad, It's just a brand new kinda free, That ain't bad, I found a brand new kinda me, Don't be mad, It's a brand new time for me." It seemed as though she also wanted her ex to accept her decision to move on; insinuating that if he truly cared about her, he would be happy that she is in this new place in her life. She said, "Hey, if you were a friend, You'd wanna get to know me again, If you were worth the while, You'd be happy to see me smile, I'm not expecting sorry, I'm too busy finding myself, I got this, I found me, I found me, yeah."

After researching the meaning of the song, I found that the story is deeper than a woman deciding to leave her past relationship behind. Wikipedia states, "The song is about personal growth and becoming a brand new version of yourself." After reading Wikipedia's interpretation, I reread the lyrics of the song and I was able to understand it much differently. It can indeed still be applied to a relationship; however, it is much more profound.

The song is able to reach much broader audiences with this analysis. When she says,

"I don't need your opinion, I'm not waiting for your "OK", I'll never be perfect, But at least now I'm brave, I know my heart is open, I can finally breathe, Don't be mad, It's just a brand new kinda free, That ain't bad, I found a brand new kinda me, Don't be mad, It's a brand new time for me," this now means to me that she doesn't need validation or approval from anyone to accept the new person she is. She is proud of whom she has become and is finally able to live freely, without thinking about anyone's opinions or expectations; she is really celebrating the new version of herself. This song can definitely be an inspiration for those who feel like it is time for change within.

~Teneshia Evans

 *“Fear Of The Dark”*  
by Stephen Percy Harris

I am a man who walks alone  
And when I'm walking a dark road  
At night strolling through the park

When the light begins to fade  
I sometimes feel a little strange  
A little anxious, when it's dark.

Fear of the dark, fear of the dark  
I have constant fear that something's always near  
Fear of the dark, fear of the dark  
I have a phobia that someone's always there

Have you run your fingers down the wall  
And have you felt your neck skin crawl  
When you're searching for the light ?  
Sometimes when you're scared to take a look  
At the corner of the room  
You've sensed that something's watching you.  
Have you ever been alone at night  
Thought you heard footsteps behind  
And turned around and no-one's there ?  
And as you quicken up your pace  
You find it hard to look again  
Because you're sure there's someone there

Watching horror films the night before  
Debating witches and folklore  
The unknown troubles on your mind  
Maybe your mind is playing tricks  
You sense, and suddenly eyes fix  
On dancing shadows from behind.

Fear of the dark, fear of the dark  
I have a constant fear, thought you heard  
Fear of the dark, fear of the dark  
I have a phobia that someone's always there.

When I'm walking a dark road  
I am a man who walks alone

**T**his dark writing is about fearing the unknown. The writer starts off with a stranger walking through the park at night as the light fades away. He starts getting anxious. He then tells us he's paranoid, he has a phobia that someone's there.

He then begins to ask the reader don't you think it strange?? Aren't you afraid to look in the corner of the room because somebody might be there? "Have you ever been alone at night Thought you heard footsteps behind, turned around and no-one's there ?" He's trying to bring us in to his fear so he can feel safer.

We then find that the Author reveals he's recently watched some horror movies and telling scary stories with his friends. Maybe, that's the reason why he feels so scared. But wait! He sees something out of the corner of his eye and sees "shadows dancing on the wall" we get he is hyper scared "I am a man who walks alone" But now he shows that although he is trying to make us scared so he doesn't have to be scared by his self, He just wants some company.

~Christopher Grogan



 *“Careless Whispers”*  
by George Michael

I feel so unsure  
As I take your hand and lead you to the dance floor  
As the music dies, something in your eyes  
Calls to the mind the silver screen  
And it's all sad good-byes  
(chorus)  
I'm never gonna dance again  
Guilty feet have got no rhythm  
Though it's easy to pretend  
I know you're not a fool  
Should've known better not to cheat a friend  
And waste the chance that I've been given  
So I'm never gonna dance again  
The way I danced with you

Time can never mend  
The careless whispers of a good friend  
To the heart and mind  
Ignorance is kind  
There's no comfort in the truth  
Pain is that all you'll find

(chorus)

Never without your love—

Tonight the music seems so loud  
I wish that we could lose this crowd  
Maybe it's better this way  
We'd hurt each other with the things we'd want to say

We could have been so good together  
We could have lived this dance forever  
But now who's gonna dance with me?  
Please stay!

(chorus)

(Now that you're gone) Now that you're gone  
(Now that you're gone) What I did's so wrong, so wrong  
That you had to leave me alone

In the first stanza, the speaker is with the woman he loves, but as he leads her to the dance floor, he is unsure of how she will behave towards his taking her hand.

In the second stanza, (not the chorus) the speaker explains that time will never mend the hurt that he brought to his loved one. The “careless whispers” that he speaks about was the careless way he handled in which he handled his relationship with the woman. The speaker also mentions how ignorance is kind, which means that when one remains in the dark, there's usually an avoidance of broken hearts.

In the third stanza (not the chorus), the speaker expresses how loud the music is playing, but figures that the loud music is better than to have quiet and hear the hurtful things that would probably be said between the him and his lover.

By the fourth stanza, he cries out that the two of them could have been really good for each other, but since he cheated on her, there's no one left worthy of taking her place, which he symbolizes with, “dancing.”

In the chorus, the speaker is regretting having cheated on his “friend.” At first, I thought that “friend” in this instance only meant a close friend of his. But as I listened over and over again to the lyrics, I believe that the speaker considered his woman to be a friend to him, too. When he says, “So I'm never gonna dance again the way I danced with you,” he means that he'll never love another woman the way he loved this one.

~Megan Harris



 *"The A Team"*  
by Ed Sheeran

White lips, pale face  
Breathing in snowflakes  
Burnt lungs, sour taste  
Light's gone, day's end  
Struggling to pay rent  
Long nights, strange men

And they say  
She's in the Class A Team  
Stuck in her daydream  
Been this way since eighteen  
But lately her face seems  
Slowly sinking, wasting  
Crumbling like pastries  
And they scream  
The worst things in life come free to us  
Cause we're just under the upper hand  
And go mad for a couple grams  
And she don't want to go outside tonight  
And in a pipe she flies to the Motherland  
Or sells love to another man  
It's too cold outside  
For angels to fly  
Angels to fly

Ripped gloves, raincoat  
Tried to swim and stay afloat  
Dry house, wet clothes  
Loose change, bank notes  
Weary-eyed, dry throat  
Call girl, no phone

And they say  
She's in the Class A Team  
Stuck in her daydream  
Been this way since eighteen  
But lately her face seems  
Slowly sinking, wasting  
Crumbling like pastries  
And they scream  
The worst things in life come free to us  
Cause we're just under the upper hand  
And go mad for a couple grams

And she don't want to go outside tonight  
And in a pipe she flies to the Motherland  
Or sells love to another man  
It's too cold outside  
For angels to fly  
An angel will die  
Covered in white  
Closed eye  
And hoping for a better life  
This time, we'll fade out tonight  
Straight down the line

And they say  
She's in the Class A Team  
Stuck in her daydream  
Been this way since eighteen  
But lately her face seems  
Slowly sinking, wasting  
Crumbling like pastries  
They scream  
The worst things in life come free to us  
And we're all under the upper hand  
Go mad for a couple grams  
And we don't want to go outside tonight  
And in a pipe we fly to the Motherland  
Or sell love to another man  
It's too cold outside  
For angels to fly  
Angels to fly  
To fly, fly  
For angels to fly, to fly, to fly  
Or angels to die



*Throughout the song, “she” is referenced, giving me the idea that the song is about a woman. However, it’s not just any woman. It’s a broken woman who is possibly a prostitute that has lost herself in drugs.*

*The first verse makes me think she’s using because the song describes how withered she’s become from snowflakes. To me, I think snowflakes is a a metaphor for cocaine. It then goes on to describe “burnt lungs, sour taste. I visualize a meth user because burnt lungs come from smoking and sour taste comes from a pipe. Finally, the last line of the first verse hints at how strong her addiction is. It’s as if she spends all day using that she can’t even pay rent and she’s willing to sleep with strange men.*

*The chorus begins to describe her as being part of the “Class A team,” possibly someone who’s been in the business for a while. I think this because Class-A usually means prestiges, high-class, or top-grade. In her case, she’s a top-rated prostitute. The idea of her being a prostitute is seen the lines about “strange men,” “sells love to another man,” and “call girl, no phone.”*

*The chorus does more than describe her business though, it shows how lost she is by describing her physical and mental transformation. After the “Class A” lines, the artist sings “latelt her face seems slowly sinking, wasting, crumbling like pastries.” This simile of pastries provides the imagery of her withering.*

*Her mental transformation is shown in the lines near the end where it sings about how much she’s addicted, she goes crazy trying to score a little high. All she does is stay inside and get high or sells herself to different men.*

*Before those lines though is my favorite line of all. When it sings “the worst things in life come free to us,” To me, it sounds like*

*the worst things in life are the decisions we make. In the second verse it describes how much she’s drowning in her choices. Everything is going wrong. She has no money. She’s deep into drugs and she can’t even make money as a callgirl because she has no phone.*

*At the end of each chorus it sings, “it’s too cold outside for angels to fly. To me, that describes her as a sinner because angels fly. However, at the end of the song, the line says, “Or angels to die.” I think that’s stating that a person’s purity can die just like how hers did.*

**~Arriane Lintag**

 *“Understanding In A Car Crash”*

by Thursday

Splintered piece of glass falls, in the seat, gets caught  
These broken windows, open locks, reminders of the youth we lost  
In trying so hard to look away from you we followed white lines to the sunset  
I crash my car everyday the same way

Time to let this pass  
(the time it takes, the time it takes to let go)  
Time runs through our veins.  
(it starts and stops and starts and stops again)  
We don't stand a chance in this threadbare time  
(the time it takes, the time it takes to let go)  
Time to let this pass  
(the time it takes, the time it takes to let go)

Staring at the setting sun  
No reason to come back again  
The twilight world in blue and white  
The needle and the damage done

I don't want to feel this way forever  
A dead letter marked return to sender

The broken watch you gave me turns into a compass  
It's two hands still point to the same time 12:03,  
our last goodbye

So push the seats back a little further  
I can see the headlights coming  
So push the seats back a little further  
Roll the windows down and take a breath  
I can see the headlights coming  
They paint the world in red and broken glass

Time to let this pass  
(the time it takes, the time it takes to let go)  
Time runs through our veins.  
(it starts and stops and starts and stops again)  
We don't stand a chance in this threadbare time  
(the time it takes, the time it takes to let go)  
Time to let this pass

(the time it takes, the time it takes to let go)

Staring at the setting sun  
No reason to come back again  
The twilight world in blue and white  
The needle and the damage done

I don't want to feel this way forever  
A dead letter marked return to sender

The spinning hubcaps set the tempo, for the music of the broken window  
The Cameras on and the cameras click  
We open up the lens and can't stop

Staring at the setting sun  
No reason to come back again  
The twilight world in blue and white  
The needle and the damage done

I don't want to feel this way forever

The lights are on and the cameras click  
We open up the lens (to broken glass!)

Staring at the setting sun (And it's over!)  
No reason to come back again (In a flash!)  
The twilight world in blue and white (and I'll never!)  
The needle and the damage done (ever understand!)

I don't want to feel this way forever (Understanding!)  
(In a Car Crash!) A dead letter marked return to sender (In a Car Crash!)  
(In a Crash!) In a Crash!



*From the beginning of the song, it is apparent that the speaker is remembering a car accident that changed his life. The speaker states that, "I crash my car everyday the same way", showing that he can't move on from this incident and he relives what happened everyday.*

*As the song continues the speaker is saying that he's ready to put the past behind him, "Time to let this pass". But things still remind him of what happened, such as "the broken watch you gave me turns into a compass". The speaker wants to move on but is struggling to let go. He is struggling to find understanding in what happened, and he can't seem to find closure.*

*In the song the beginning verses start off slow and then pick up speed as the speaker becomes frustrated with the internal war of wanting move forward, but still stuck inside that car crash.*

**~Hannah Goins Yavuz**

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