



Safe & Sound (Taylor Swift song)

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"**Safe & Sound**" is a song by American recording artist Taylor Swift and alternative country duo The Civil Wars, taken from *The Hunger Games: Songs from District 12 and Beyond*, the official soundtrack for the 2012 film *The Hunger Games*. The artists co-wrote the track with its producer, T-Bone Burnett; the song was written at Burnett's house within two hours.

The song was released to iTunes in the US December 26, 2011, and was later added to the BBC Radio 1 playlist. The song was critically lauded, with critics praising Swift's breathy vocals, the simplicity of the music, and its lyrics, some citing it as a welcome return to form for Swift.

Background

"Safe & Sound" was written by Taylor Swift, Joy Williams, John Paul White, and T-Bone Burnett.^[1] In summer 2011, Lionsgate required Burnett to record songs for *The Hunger Games: Songs from District 12 and Beyond*, and he subsequently corralled a range of artists, including Swift, Maroon 5, The Civil Wars, and Arcade Fire. On a fall night in 2011, Burnett and the production team, as well as Swift and The Civil Wars, came to Burnett's house in Los Angeles to write the lyrics. After two hours, the song was finished. Swift further elaborated, "The Civil Wars had a show that night in L.A., so they raced right over to T Bone's house. There's so many things he could've done production-wise to make that song bigger sonically than it is, but I think that would have possibly been a mistake. For him to have left the song as a lullaby is brilliant."^[2]

On December 22, 2011, Swift posted a portion of the song's lyrics via her Twitter account and said that "Something I've been [very] excited about for a [very] long time is going to be happening very soon."^[3] Four days later, the song was released digitally on iTunes Store.^[4]

Composition

"Safe & Sound"



Single by Taylor Swift featuring
The Civil Wars

from the album *The Hunger Games: Songs from District 12 and Beyond*

Released	December 26, 2011
Genre	<u>Folk</u> · <u>alternative country</u>
Length	4:01
Label	<u>Big Machine</u>
Songwriter(s)	<u>Taylor Swift</u> · <u>Joy Williams</u> · <u>John Paul White</u> · <u>T-Bone Burnett</u>
Producer(s)	<u>T-Bone Burnett</u>

Taylor Swift singles chronology

<u>"Ours"</u> (2011)	"Safe & Sound" (2011)	<u>"Long Live"</u> (2012)
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"Safe and Sound" is a departure of Swift from her previous country pop releases,^[5] and is rather described as a moody folk ballad.^{[6][7]} *Rolling Stone* deemed the song reminiscent of alternative country music.^[2] Written in the key of G major, the track has a moderate slow tempo of 72 beats per minute. Swift's vocal range on the song spans from the low-note of G₃ to the high-note of D₅.^[8] The song is mainly accompanied by an acoustic guitar and features The Civil Wars' "harmony" vocals.^[9] According to Swift, the theme of "Safe & Sound" represents "the empathy and compassion Katniss feels for Rue, Peeta, and Prim in different parts of [*The Hunger Games*]."^[5]

The Civil Wars singles chronology		
"Birds of a Feather (Live)" (2011)	"Safe & Sound" (2011)	"Billie Jean" (2012)
Music video		
"Safe & Sound" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzhAS_GnJlc) on YouTube		

Critical reception

"Safe & Sound" received mainly positive reviews from music critics. Jody Rosen from *Rolling Stone* gave the song four out of five stars, calling it Swift's "prettiest ballad."^[10] In a review of *The Hunger Games: Songs from District 12 and Beyond*, AllMusic's Heather Phares picked it as one of the highlights on the soundtrack, calling it "the most crucial" track.^[11] Idolator praised Swift's "breathiness that sounds more eerie than sweet",^[12] while Jason Lipshutz writing for *Billboard* commended the "non-Swiftian anthem that embraces the folksiness of the soundtrack" and favored the guest appearance contributed by The Civil Wars.^[7] In a less favorable feedback, Darren Franich, and editor from *Entertainment Weekly*, was not impressed towards the track's lyrics and Swift's vocals, writing that "there's no sense of triumph". He further added that "Safe & Sound" "sounds more like a funeral dirge than a victory chant, especially as the song continues with light percussion that sounds like soldiers marching to their doom."^[13] *The Wall Street Journal*'s Christopher John Farley agreed, opining that the song "has a rural feel, but doesn't sound like a commercial country song."^[3]

At the 2012 Country Music Association Awards, "Safe & Sound" was nominated for Musical Event of the Year.^[14] It also garnered a CMT Music Award nomination for Collaborative of the Year in that year.^[15] The song was nominated for Best Original Song at the 70th Golden Globe Awards in 2013, but lost to Adele's "Skyfall".^[16] At the 2013 Grammy Awards, "Safe & Sound" received a nomination for Best Country Duo/Group Performance, but lost to "Pontoon" by Little Big Town, and won the Best Song Written for Visual Media.^[17]

Chart performance

During the first week of release, "Safe & Sound" entered the *Billboard* Hot Digital Songs at number 19 with 136,000 digital units sold.^[18] On the *Billboard* Hot 100, the single debuted and peaked at number 30.^[19] Following the release of the song's music video, it re-entered the Hot 100 at number 56.^[20] In its eleventh week on chart, the song rose number 71 to number 35, prior to the release of *The Hunger Games* soundtrack.^[21] The track was certified double platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). As of November 2014, the song has sold 1.8 million copies in the United States.^[22] The track also peaked at number 31 on the Canadian Hot 100 chart.^[23] Internationally, "Safe & Sound" attained moderate commercial success. The single peaked at number 38 on the Australian ARIA Singles Chart and stayed on the chart for three weeks.^[24] It was more successful in New Zealand, peaking at number 11 on the New Zealand Singles Chart and remained for five weeks.^[25] "Safe & Sound" also charted on the UK Singles Chart at number 67.^[26]

Music video

The song's music video, which is directed by [Philip Andelman](#), premiered on February 13, 2012 at 7:54 p.m. ET on [MTV](#).^[27] The video features Swift, walking barefoot through a forest in [Watertown, Tennessee](#), wearing a long white gown. Between scenes, [The Civil Wars](#) are seen inside a cottage house sitting in front of a fireplace as they sing along to the song.^[28] It contains multiple references to [The Hunger Games](#), including Swift finding a [mockingjay](#) pin.^[29]

The music video was shot in a cemetery, and features a scene of Swift sitting atop the graves of a couple who died in 1853.^[30]

Live performances

During the Australian leg of the [Speak Now World Tour](#), Swift added "Safe & Sound" to the tour's setlist.^[31] Swift performed the track while sitting on a couch onstage, wearing a "sparkling, floor-length gown", which, according to [Brittany Cooper](#) of [Taste of Country](#), was slightly reminiscent of [Belle](#) from [Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*](#) (1991). Cooper provided a positive feedback to the performance, writing that "[Swift] took the song with a whimsical air and gave it all the mystique you would expect from the haunting ballad."^[32]

Track listing

Digital download^[4]

- 1. "Safe & Sound" – 4:01

Release history

Country	Date	Format	Label
Belgium ^[33]	December 26, 2011	Digital download	Big Machine Records
Brazil ^[34]			
Canada ^[4]			
Finland ^[35]			
Germany ^[36]			
Portugal ^[37]			
Russia ^[38]			
Spain ^[39]			
Switzerland ^[40]			
United States ^[41]			
United Kingdom ^[42]	March 28, 2012	Contemporary hit radio	

Charts and certifications

Weekly charts

Chart (2011–12)	Peak position
Australia (ARIA) ^[24]	38
Belgium (Ultratip Bubbling Under Flanders) ^[43]	62
Canada (Canadian Hot 100) ^[23]	31
New Zealand (Recorded Music NZ) ^[25]	11
Poland (Dance Top 50) ^[44]	44
South Korea International Singles (Gaon) ^[45]	42
UK Singles (Official Charts Company) ^[26]	67
US <i>Billboard</i> Hot 100 ^[46]	30

Certifications

Region	Certification	Certified units/sales
United States (RIAA) ^[47]	2× Platinum [†]	1,800,000 ^[22]
* Sales figures based on certification alone. ^ Shipments figures based on certification alone.		

[†] Since May 2013 RIAA certifications for digital singles include on-demand audio and/or video song streams in addition to downloads.^[48]

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External links

- [Official music video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzhAS_GnJlc\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzhAS_GnJlc) on *YouTube*
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