

= Simple Kind of Life =

" Simple Kind of Life " is a pop rock ballad written by Gwen Stefani for No Doubt 's fourth album Return of Saturn (2000) . The song contrasts Stefani 's desire to settle down and start a family with her commitment to the band . It received positive reviews from music critics , who noted the song 's somber melody and raw lyrics .

" Simple Kind of Life " was released as the album 's second single in June 2000 (see 2000 in music , also " New " is a single from a soundtrack) . It became the most successful American single from Return of Saturn , but had little international success . The accompanying music video illustrates the song 's themes of marriage and family .

= Background and writing =

Singer Gwen Stefani wrote and composed the track during a last minute recording session . Stefani had been writing with bassist Tony Kanal that day , and she wrote the song late at night during what she referred to as " a PMS moment " . Following " Suspension Without Suspense " , " Simple Kind of Life " became the second song that Stefani wrote by herself . The song was recorded , with no rehearsals , the following Monday . Adrian Young 's drum parts were mixed through low fidelity filters to get the feel of a lo @-@ fi power ballad .

The lyrics of " Simple Kind of Life " also discuss Stefani 's relationship with Gavin Rossdale . She describes wanting to settle down , get married , and have children . In the final verse , she even dreams about how her life would be if there were a mistake in her birth control and she became pregnant . However , she contrasts this with her commitment to music and No Doubt . Stefani describes her relationship as unhealthy because of this disparity , comparing herself to " a sick domestic abuser looking for a fight . " She ultimately decides that settling down is just a fantasy for her since her freedom and independence is more important for her .

= Music and structure =

" Simple Kind of Life " is a pop rock song composed in the key of C major . It is written in common time and moves at a moderate tempo of 116 beats per minute . Stefani 's vocal range in the song covers nearly an octave and a half , from G3 to C5 .

The song opens with a four @-@ measure introduction , which introduces the Dm9 @-@ Cmaj7 modal chord progression used for the song 's three verses . Following each verse is the chorus , where the harmony switches to a Cmaj7 @-@ Em7 @-@ F @-@ B ? progression . A bridge entirely in D minor precedes the third verse . After the third chorus comes a coda , which closes the song as Stefani repeats the phrase " a simple kind of life " ad libitum while the song fades , as the song confirms its dreamy major tonality in a series of Cmaj7 and Fmaj7 chords .

= Critical reception =

" Simple Kind of Life " received positive reviews from music critics . Rolling Stone described the song as being " at once grand , fragile and very , very sad " and commented that " it 's clear this woman whom many desire but few regard as a serious artist has penned a song that can sit on the same shelf with the likes of Elliott Smith and Aimee Mann . " Entertainment Weekly characterized the song as " manicured power pop " with a melody " buttery to the point of melting " . It later included the song in a list of No Doubt 's top five songs , referring to it as " musically understated (layered guitar strumming and a melancholy melody) , but lyrically devastating . " Slant Magazine found the song 's melodic structure odd , but was pleased by how it " unabashedly delivers double @-@ takes " . " Simple Kind of Life " was listed at number twenty @-@ eight on the 2000 Pazz & Jop list , a survey of several hundred music critics conducted by Robert Christgau .

= Chart performance =

In the United States , " Simple Kind of Life " was the most commercially successful single from Return of Saturn . Peaking at number 38 , it became the album 's only single to enter the Billboard Hot 100 . The song fared somewhat better in mainstream music , reaching number 32 on the Top 40 Mainstream and number 35 on the Top 40 Tracks . It had the most success with modern rock and adult contemporary stations , peaking at number 14 on the Modern Rock Tracks and number 18 on the Adult Top 40 . The single was a commercial failure outside of the U.S. It debuted at the bottom of the Dutch Mega Single Top 100 in mid @-@ June 2000 . It climbed up two positions the next week but exited the chart after its third week .

= = Music video = =

The song 's music video was directed by Sophie Muller . It opens with a scene of Stefani and Kanal holding each other . During the chorus , she runs to a church while wearing a wedding dress designed after a fashion show by John Galliano , while her bandmates run after her . During the next verse , Stefani and guitarist Tom Dumont sit on a couch , and Stefani gets up on the table while Dumont plays an acoustic guitar . Stefani has a nightmare during the second chorus , in which she is in an endless hall full of wedding cakes , attempting to stop her bandmates from destroying them . There is then a dream sequence in which Stefani is backlit in front of a circle of stars . She sits with Young for the third verse , during which point in time a light in the shape of a birth control pills flashes , with one missing pill . This coincides with her line " Sometime I wished / For a mistake , " referencing her desire to get pregnant . In the video , Young quickly stands up and leaves after her line " You seem like you 'd be a good dad " to play with Dumont and Kanal . The band walks through a cemetery , and Stefani finds a baby . Her bandmates extend their arms to hold the baby , but Stefani hands the baby off to a woman and enters her trailer to remove her makeup .

Muller was staying with Stefani when the song was written , so Stefani stated that " it was obvious that she would be the one to do the video " when Stefani played Muller the song after writing it . Muller designed the video around the song 's lyrics because she felt that " there are very few [songs] that reveal as much in their lyrics " . The scenes were storyboarded so that Muller could give the band a chance to act out the scenes more . She set the band members up with props and filmed after giving loose suggestions . Muller originally intended for the dream sequence to show Stefani over a sea of orange juice but changed the scene based on Stefani 's performance .

The music video was unsuccessful on video chart programs . It debuted at number seven on MTV 's Total Request Live on April 24 , 2000 . The video made two more appearances later that week but was unable to reach a higher position and dropped out of the countdown . It was unable to chart on MuchMusic 's Countdown .

= = Track listings = =

= = Charts = =