

= Misery (Gwen Stefani song) =

" Misery " is a song recorded by American singer and songwriter Gwen Stefani , taken from her third studio album , This Is What the Truth Feels Like . While originally intended to be released as the album 's second single , Interscope Records released it as a promotional single on March 11 , 2016 , before Stefani revealed on Instagram that it is the album 's third single . It was serviced to hot adult contemporary radio on May 23 , 2016 . The electropop track was written by Stefani , Justin Tranter , Julia Michaels , Mattias Larsson , and Robin Fredriksson , while production was handled by Mattman & Robin .

Lyrically , " Misery " discusses getting over a past lover , while accepting a new one . Many critics felt that the song was inspired by her relationships with Gavin Rossdale and Blake Shelton , and Stefani confirmed in an interview that " Misery " was written about the latter . Upon release , " Misery " received highly positive reviews from music critics , who praised the song for being " addictive " and " catchy " . However , some critics were confused over who the song was written about . A lyric video for the song was uploaded to Stefani 's Vevo account on March 10 , 2016 and featured hand-drawn illustrations created by Stefani ; the song 's official video debuted on May 31 and displayed Stefani in various dresses and outfits .

= = Background and release = =

After the lackluster response to Stefani 's previous singles , " Baby Don 't Lie " and " Spark the Fire " , she scrapped the release of her studio album to begin work on " more authentic " material . When Stefani divorced her then husband Gavin Rossdale , she began writing intimate songs for a brand new project . Following the completion and release of " Used to Love You " , Stefani continued writing personal tracks to express her feelings . Several months after writing various songs , Stefani began shifting focus and writing tracks about Blake Shelton instead of Rossdale ; Stefani confirmed that " Misery " was written about " her newfound happiness with Shelton " in an interview with Dana Ross Falcone of Entertainment Weekly .

" Misery " became one of the later songs written for the project , and was later announced to be the second single released from This Is What the Truth Feels Like . Stefani later confirmed via Twitter that " Misery " would be released instead as a promotional single on March 8 , 2016 . After providing a sneak preview of the track on Instagram on March 10 , 2016 , Stefani released the track to the iTunes Store an hour later . The song was serviced to hot adult contemporary radio on May 23 , 2016 as the album 's third single .

= = Composition = =

An electropop song , " Misery " was written by Stefani , Justin Tranter , Julia Michaels , Mattias Larsson , and Robin Fredriksson ; production of the track was handled by Swedish songwriting duo Mattman & Robin . As described by Dee Lockett of Vulture , " Misery " contains " some synths , a funky bassline , and well-placed hand claps to disguise the pain . " Leoni Cooper of NME stated that " Misery " has " future-disco beats " , and " captures the highs and lows of being " gobsmailed in love , " using the metaphor that " a love is as irresistible as drugs . " Nicki Gostin , writing for the New York Daily News , questioned the song 's subject matter , stating " it 's not clear who she 's crooning about ? ex Gavin Rossdale or new love Blake Shelton " ; Alexis Rhiannon of Bustle claimed that the song " give [s] an inside look to a painful past relationship . "

= = Critical reception = =

Upon release , " Misery " received mostly favorable reviews from contemporary music critics . Daniel Kreps of Rolling Stone called the song " addictive " and " catchy " while having " feel-good lyrics . " Mashable 's Emily Blake praised the song and stated " try not to get hooked . " A reviewer from TooFab enjoyed the " surprisingly upbeat " sound of the track compared to Stefani 's

single , " Used to Love You " . Writing for Entertainment Weekly , Leah Greenblatt dubbed " Misery " as a " come @-@ on disguised as [a] caution " ; Greenblatt further praised the song for being a " stomper " . Sal Cinquemani of Slant called the track a " standout " .

Lucas Villa of AXS praised Stefani for " continu [ing] her streak of solid pop tunes by turning her confessional lyrics into completely delectable hooks , " further stating that " if this is misery , sign us up for more of it please " ; similarly , Emilee Lindner of fuseTV praised the track for " Gwen 's bouncy voice " . Lauren Duca , writing for The Frisky , labeled " Misery " as " catchy " and joked that " whether the song 's subject is Gavin Rossdale or Blake Shelton , I 'd burn calories listening to this song if it was about a Pomeranian Gwen met at a shelter and regrets not adopting . " On the same subject of Shelton and Rossdale , Amanda Bell of MTV News enjoyed the song , but was confused over the song 's lyrics and compared it to Stefani 's song " Make Me Like You " , stating " and unlike [" Misery "] , " Make Me Like You " was pretty straightforward with the ' in like ' adoration message " but later said she 's " miserably stumped " when it comes to " Misery " .

= = Music videos = =

Two videos were produced for " Misery " . A lyric video for the track was released on March 10 , 2016 on Stefani 's official YouTube account . The video displays handwritten lyrics by Stefani on graph paper , note cards , and post @-@ it notes ; it also features several photos of Stefani during a photo shoot for This Is What the Truth Feels Like .

The official music video debuted on May 31 , 2016 , also on her YouTube account . The video directed by longtime collaborator Sophie Muller and was filmed at a warehouse and parking garage with varying locations at a loft space , a staircase , and a hydraulic elevator .

= = = Synopsis = = =

The video opens with Stefani standing behind a counter in an abandoned warehouse . Her attire consists of an outfit similar to that of Lady Liberty . Various scenes of Stefani in a garden @-@ inspired sheer dress and a " flower crown " appear , as darkened shots of her face also are shown , amongst a trio of background dancers . For the song 's pre @-@ chorus , Stefani is shown in a gothic , black dress , sitting on a white couch , where she pretends to faint . During the entire chorus , Stefani wears a red , flowing dress and activates a smoke machine .

The second verse shows her in the garden dress , where she continually rides an elevator through the warehouse ; in a separate scene , the background dancers also ride the elevator . In front of a flower wallpaper , Stefani wears a fluffy , pink dress where she gracefully falls to floor . The next chorus displays Stefani in a black bob wig , " walk [ing] effortlessly down some stairs in patent leather , thigh @-@ high stilettos " . The song 's bridge has Stefani wearing a black and white leotard with thigh @-@ high silver boots , while sitting on a stool . A black horse appears , alongside Stefani in a black and white @-@ striped dress , before she slowly runs away from the horse . The song 's final chorus has Stefani riding a bicycle through a brightly @-@ lit parking garage , before she returns to the smoke machine and , once again , falls to the ground as the screen fades to black .

= = = Reception = = =

The official music video received highly favorable reviews from music critics . Seija Rankin of E ! Online stated " Contrary to the song 's title , this tune and the corresponding video is not actually miserable at all ; it 's quite upbeat . " Madison Vain for Entertainment Weekly applauded the visual , calling it " gorgeous " and a " high @-@ fashion affair " . Matthew Scott Donnelly , writing for Pop Crush , applauded it for " turn [ing] a parking garage into [an] artist 's oasis " ; he also appreciated the video 's " cool , sexy edge " . Nate Scott from the USA Today acclaimed the video : " Good lord , this video . Who is the art director ? Come take my life over and make everything this beautiful . "

= = Live performances = =

Stefani performed " Misery " for the first time on March 17 , 2016 . The performance was during a special private concert for MasterCard users in Tokyo , Japan . During the performance , Stefani wore " cropped red track pants and a red sequined cage top over a black bra " as the lyric video was displayed as the backdrop ; " Misery " was followed by a performance of " Make Me Like You " . On her Saturday Night Live performance of " Misery " , Stefani wore torn jeans and a high @-@ waisted top , accompanied by several backup singers , including No Doubt bandmates Gabrial McNair and Stephen Bradley . Stefani performed " Misery " on April 19 , 2016 on The Voice . Stefani and her back @-@ up dancers wore " colorful , tribal style ensembles " and performed using " a trippy , psychedelic lighting scheme " .

= = Track listing = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Management

Recorded at Wolf Cousins Studios , Stockholm , Sweden ; Maratone Studios , Stockholm , Sweden ; and Interscope Studios , Santa Monica , California

Personnel

Credits adapted from the liner notes of This Is What the Truth Feels Like

= = Charts = =

= = Release history = =