

= Stephen (song) =

" Stephen " is a song by American recording artist and songwriter Kesha , taken from her debut studio album *Animal* (2010) . The song was written by Kesha in collaboration with David Gamson , Pebe Sebert , Oliver Leiber . It was produced by Gamson with additional production done by Leiber . The song 's instrumentation was by Gamson , with the exception of the accordion , which was played by Kesha . Kesha wrote the song about a boy that she had been stalking and who had refused to call the singer .

Musically , Stephen is a dance @-@ pop song that incorporates elements of country music . The song received some positive reviews from music critics upon its release . After the release of *Animal* for download , Stephen charted on the lower regions of the South Korea Gaon International Chart . A music video for the song was released on the repackaging of the singer 's debut album , *Animal + Cannibal* .

= = Writing and inspiration = =

Stephen was written by Kesha Sebert , in collaboration with her mother Pebe Sebert , David Gamson , and Oliver Leiber . The song was produced by Gamson with additional production by Leiber . Gamson played all the instruments on the song , with the exception of the accordion which was performed by Kesha . The song 's recording was commenced at ACME Recording , Long Island , California , and at Ollywood Studios , Hollywood , California , by Gamson . Kesha told *Rolling Stone* that Stephen was one of her favorite tracks on the album . She explained that the song stemmed from her experiences with a man that she had been " stalking since [she] was 15 . " It was written when the singer was sixteen , in collaboration with her mother . She found David Gamson to produce the song . " He does all the keyboard stuff , he 's amazing , a crazy cynical genius guy , and he liked my voice and my thing , and I really liked his thing , so we decided to work together " she explained .

Kesha was inspired to write the song after continual rejection from the protagonist in the song , Stephen , who refused to call the singer . She told MTV " I wrote [it] about this guy that I 've been stalking since I was , like , 15 , but he 's a total loser , so I don 't want to glorify him in any way , but I 'm really excited for the song . " In February 2010 , after the release of the song , Stephen attended one of the singer 's concerts . Speaking to *Total Access* on 96.4FM *The Wave* , the singer recalled the experience saying " he came to see my show at this huge gay bar in New York and it was totally off the chain . He gets up on stage , takes all his clothes off except his underwear and starts making out with a tranny . I was like , ' Wait a minute , have I been barking up the wrong genre of tree ? ' "

= = Composition = =

" Stephen " is a song composed in the dance @-@ pop genre that also incorporates elements of country music . According to digital sheet music published at Musicnotes.com by Sony @-@ ATV Music Publishing , the song is written in the key of D major and the tempo moves at 100 beats per minute at a moderately fast rate . Kesha 's vocal range in the song spans from the lower note of E3 to the higher note of D5 . The lyrics begin with Kesha singing " Stephen , Stephen , why won 't you call me ? . " The song 's lyrics depict the tale of the singer stalking her then crush , Stephen , who ultimately would not call the singer . " Stephen " opens with layered a cappella harmonies , later transitioning into a dominantly driven pop song . According to the singer , " Stephen " showcases her more vulnerable side and encompasses humor throughout its lyrics : " ' Stephen ' shows the vulnerable side of me but it 's still a funny pop song . It 's me saying I 'm totally obsessive and in love with this guy , but he 's blowing me off in a pretty funny way . "

Fraser McAlpine of BBC called the song " a vulnerable ode to an unreliable crush . " Daniel Brockman of *The Phoenix* thought that the song 's lyrics were " an ode to forcing your sexual advances on your high @-@ school history teacher . " According to Andrew Burgess of musicOMH , the song " tells the story of that one guy Ke \$ ha can 't bag : ' What the hell ? I can charm the pants

off anyone else , but you . ' " Ann Powers of the Los Angeles Times felt that the song was experimental , comparing it to the group Animal Collective .

= = Critical reception = =

Stephen received positive comments from music critics . Fraser McAlpine of BBC Music used Stephen as an example of the songs on Animal (2010) that exemplified the singer 's vocals , saying it had " beautiful layered a cappella harmonies . Sure , it tumbles into clunky pop straight afterwards , but then , that also seems to be what she does : beautiful things are bashed against ugly things , pretty melodies ruined by silly noises , emotional lyrics stuffed with buzzwords . " Daniel Brockman of The Boston Phoenix wrote of the album that " in a post ? ' Birthday Sex ' pop landscape , there 's plenty of room for dumb if it 's done well . " He described Stephen as " an ode to forcing your sexual advances on your high @-@ school history teacher . " Ann Powers of the Los Angeles Times listed the song as one of those that exemplified the album 's more experimental side , calling it a " country @-@ in @-@ space " rendition .

musicOMH 's writer Andrew Burgess wrote that the album was composed of " obligatory ballads " and used Stephen as an example , saying it has " Kansas @-@ style vocal harmonies " . His consensus regarding the album 's ballads was that " Perhaps Ke \$ ha is , in fact , a more complex and multi @-@ faceted party girl than she seems like on the surface . " Digital Spy commented that the Kesha uses the album " to show her vulnerable side " and that " she admits she can 't take rejection on the country @-@ tinged ' Stephen ' . "

= = Music video = =

A music video for " Stephen " was directed by the production team Skinny . The video was released on the deluxe repacking of her debut album Animal , under its re @-@ release entitled Animal + Cannibal . It was later uploaded to the singer 's Vevo account on April 4 , 2011 . The video is composed of still shots that show the singer " going to some extreme lengths to show ' Stephen ' how much she 's feeling him . " The video opens with the singer looking through a scrapbook ; following this the video then proceeds into depicting the singer 's interactions with the protagonist . The video 's first setting is located at a bar where the singer gets into a verbal altercation with the man 's girlfriend . Kesha , who later leaves with the then unconscious man , takes him back to her house to takes pictures of him and later cuts off some of his hair for her shrine . The singer then duct @-@ tapes the man and locks him in her closet ; which he later escapes from . Following this , the singer is distraught and then builds another man out of a dummy , and using the hair she had clipped earlier , proceeds to bring the dummy to a bar , getting into another altercation with it and later leaving it in the street ? ending the video .

= = Track listing = =

Digital download

" Stephen " ? 3 : 32

= = Credits and personnel = =

Recording

Recorded by David Gamson at ACME Recording , Long Island , California ; and at Ollywood Studios , Hollywood , California .

Personnel

Songwriting ? Kesha Sebert , David Gamson , Pebe Sebert , Oliver Leiber

Production ? David Gamson , Oliver Leiber

Instruments and programming ? David Gamson

Accordion ? Kesha

Credits adapted from the liner notes of *Animal* , Kemosabe Recordings , via RCA Records .

= = Charts = =

Upon the release of *Animal* , " Stephen " debuted and peaked at number at eighty @-@ nine on the issue date of January 3 , 2010 , on the South Korea Gaon International Songs Chart . The song was the ninth highest debuting album track from its parent album .