

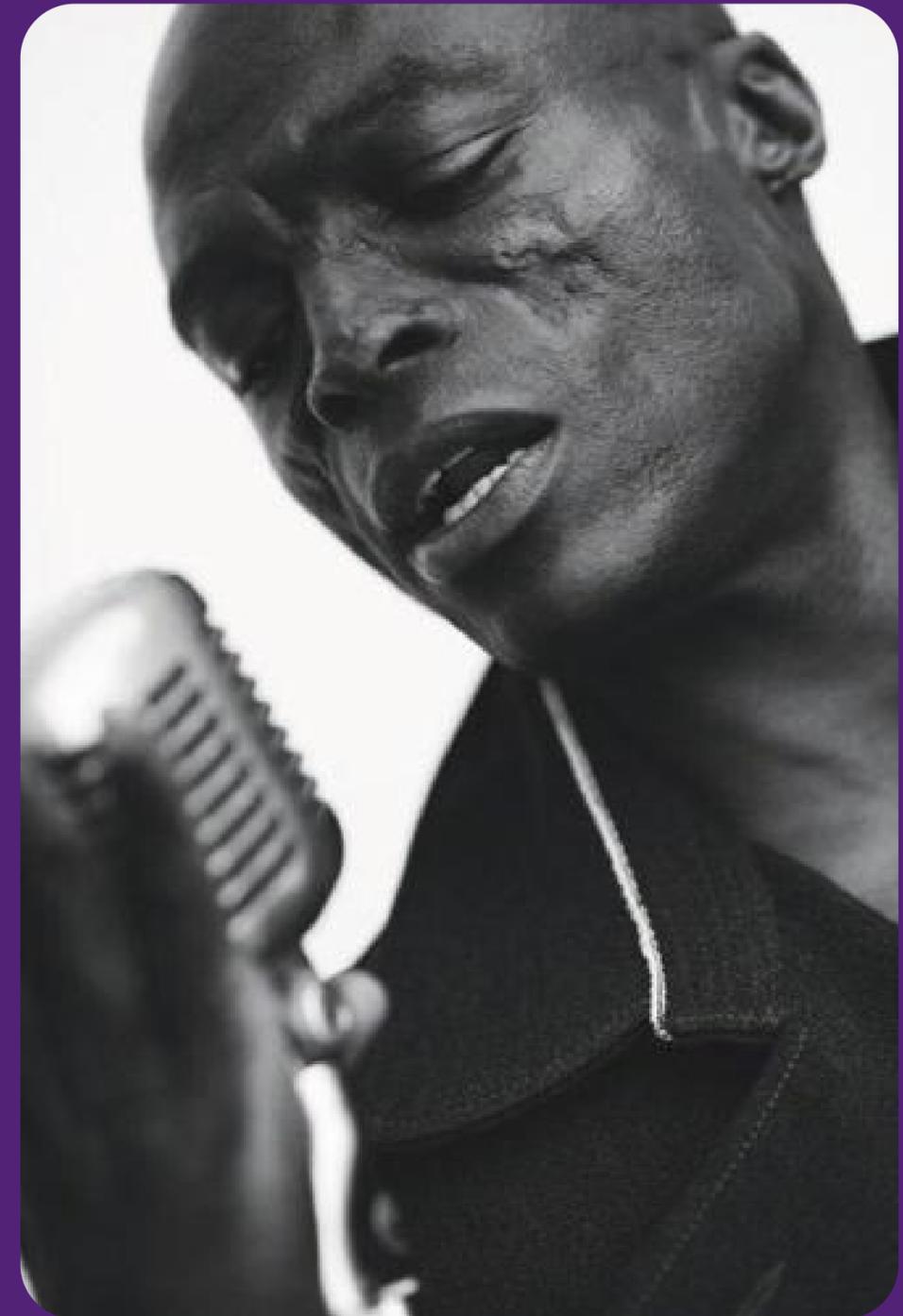
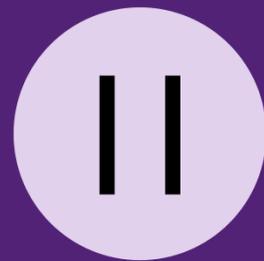
✦ “THE MORE I GET OF YOU THE
✦ STRANGER IT FEELS” ✦

✦ NARRATIVIZING THE STAGES OF ADDICTION THROUGH SEAL'S
✦ ‘KISS FROM A ROSE’ ✦

Mercedes Shook, MT-BC ✦

EXPERIMENT TIME!

KISS FROM A ROSE
SEAL



What are your thoughts on the meaning of Kiss From a Rose by Seal?

25 years later from when I first heard it and I still think this is one of the *greatest songs ever*, even though up to now I really don't quite understand what **exactly** Kiss From A Rose is supposed to mean and maybe that is what Seal wanted or

I was looking for the meaning of "gray", that is being referred to in the song, without which it is difficult to comprehend what the lyrics are actually all about,

NO WORRIES, YOU'RE NOT ALONE!



song and how many times he must have sang each line, in various tones too, *and what the heck was he singing about???*

I am just now discovering this. **What the heck does "on the gray" mean?!**
All these years I have been singing this song completely wrong. Tell me I'm not the only one...

default. **The words are somewhat cryptic**, especially the lines about a "greying tower," and the Internet is rife with opinions about what it all means, from growing old to some type of drug



TALK ABOUT RANGE



WHY DOES IT RESONATE?

- Unique musical characteristics
 - modal mixture
 - harmonic loops
 - *unusual* lyrics



Verified Annotation

10 years ago

Seal

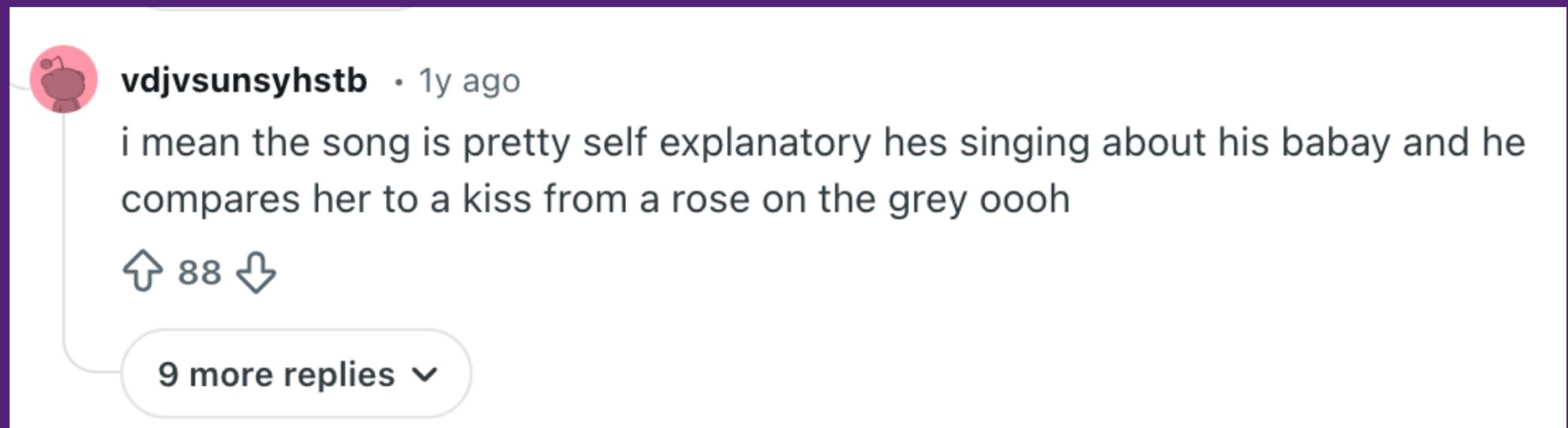
I have avoided explaining these lyrics for over 25 years. I am not going to start doing it now.

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WHY DOES IT RESONATE?

- ambiguous narrative
 - death
 - toxic love
 - addiction

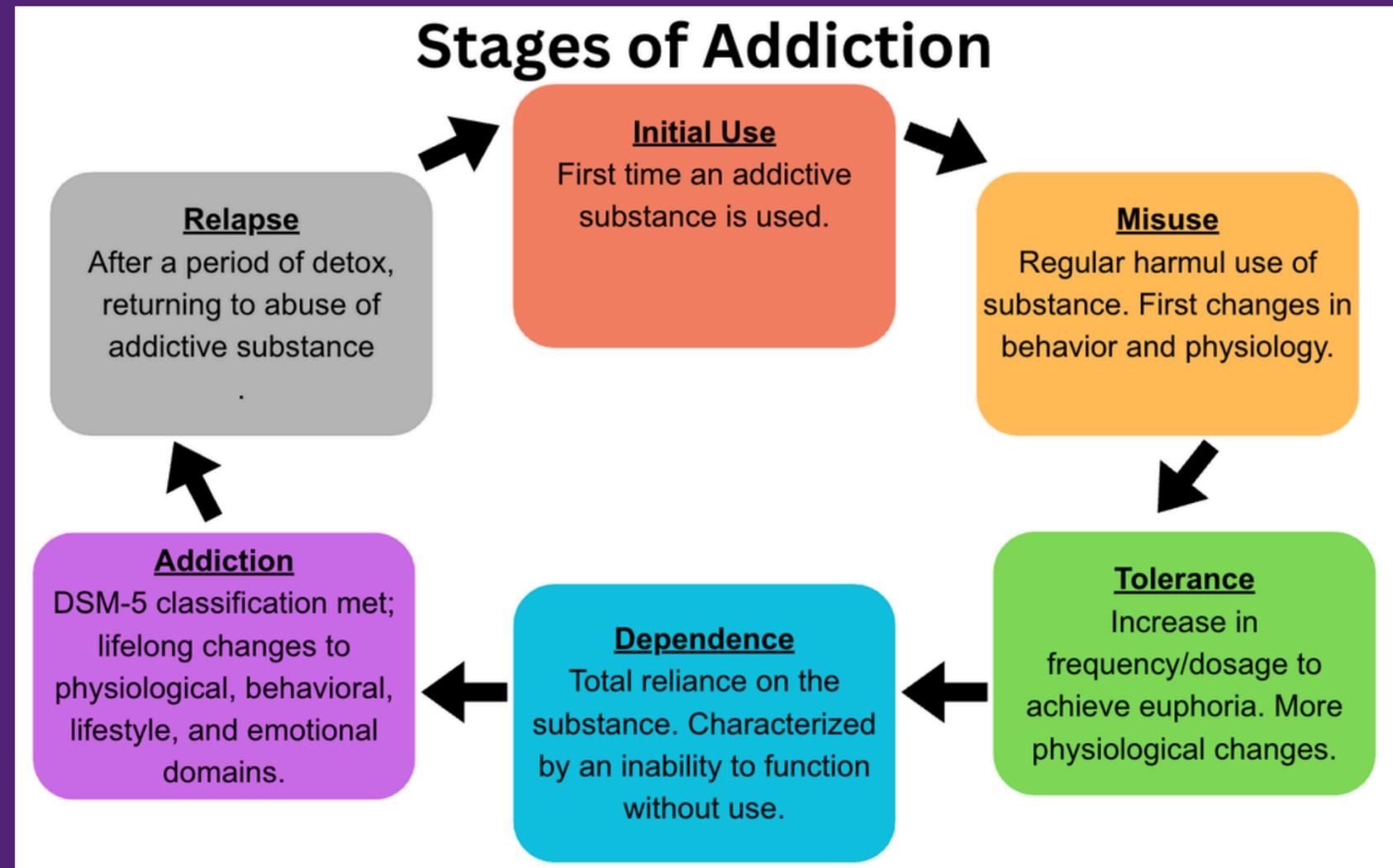




This presentation explores one possible narrative of “Kiss from a Rose” by analyzing how the song's harmonic and lyrical interplay depict the first five stages of addiction

ADDICTION

- compulsive use of a substance/behavior despite impairments to one's life
- six stages: initial use, misuse, tolerance, dependence, addiction, and relapse.



HARMONY

- Moves between G Aeolian and G Mixolydian (ish)
- Uses harmonic loop I-bVI-bVII-I
- Developed to musically mirror imagery created by the lyrics
- Musical analogs for diminishing gratification and physiological changes

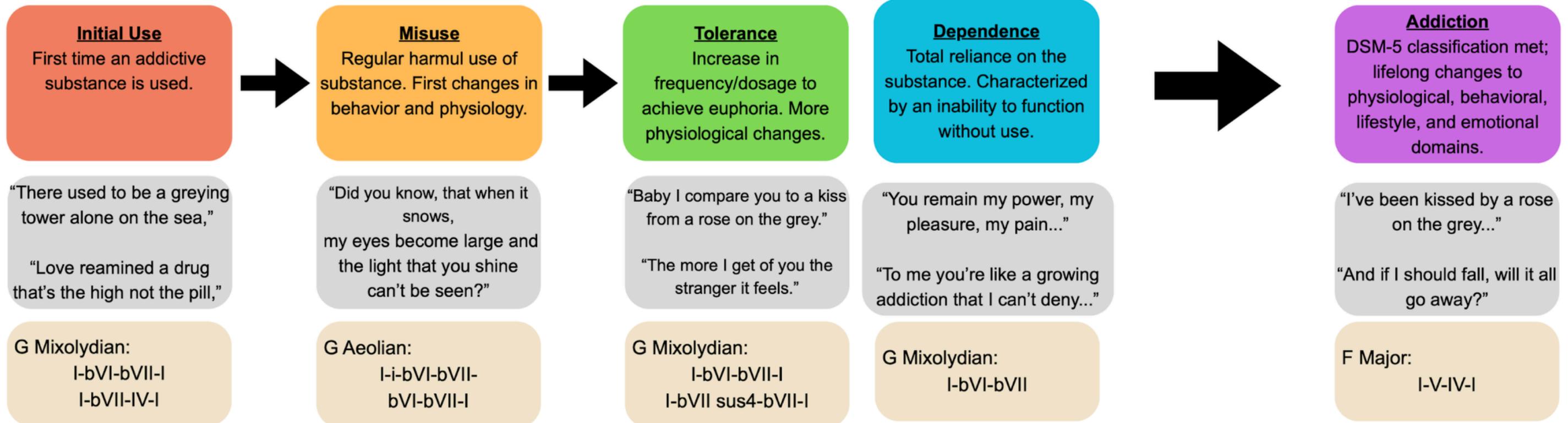
The image shows a musical score for a song. The top staff is the vocal line, starting at measure 16 with the lyrics "Ba - by, I com-pare you to a kiss from a rose on the grey." The bottom two staves are the piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The harmonic progression is indicated by Roman numerals in red: I, bVI, bVII, and I. Above the vocal staff, guitar chord diagrams are provided for G, Eb, F, and G. The G chord diagram shows a barre on the first fret. The Eb chord diagram shows a barre on the third fret. The F chord diagram shows a barre on the first fret. The G chord diagram shows a barre on the first fret.



PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Stages of Addiction

Stages of Addiction



Harmony Lyrics

INITIAL USE

Initial Use

First time an addictive substance is used.

“There used to be a greying tower alone on the sea,”

“Love remained a drug that’s the high not the pill,”

G Mixolydian:

I-bVI-bVII-I

I-bVII-IV-I

The image shows a musical score for the song "Initial Use". It consists of three staves: a vocal line, a piano accompaniment line, and a bass line. The key signature is G Mixolydian (one flat, G major with a lowered seventh). The time signature is 8/8. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure is labeled with a guitar chord G (000) and the lyrics "sea.". The second measure is labeled with a guitar chord Eb (3x) and the lyrics "You ____ be-came the". The third measure is labeled with a guitar chord F and the lyrics "light on the dark side of". The fourth measure is labeled with a guitar chord G (000) and the lyrics "me.". The piano accompaniment and bass line provide harmonic support for the vocal line. The lyrics "You ____ be-came the light on the dark side of me." are highlighted with a red box. The chord progression I-bVI-bVII-I is indicated below the piano accompaniment.

MISUSE

Misuse

Regular harmful use of substance. First changes in behavior and physiology.

“Did you know, that when it snows,
my eyes become large and
the light that you shine
can't be seen?”

G Aeolian:

I-i-bVI-bVII-
bVI-bVII-I

The image displays a musical score for the song "Did You Know" by The Beatles. The score is written in G Aeolian mode (G minor). The lyrics are: "But did you know that when it snows, my eyes be-come large and the light that you". The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The second system shows the piano accompaniment with guitar chord diagrams above it. The guitar chords are Eb, F, and Eb. The piano accompaniment has red labels bVI, bVII, and bVI under the chords. A red box highlights the first system, and a red box highlights the second system. The guitar chord diagrams are: Eb (3x), F, and Eb (3x).

TOLERANCE

the grey. — The more I get of you the stran - ger it feels, yeah. —

G
000

F sus
xx

F

G
000

I

bVI sus4

bVI

I

Tolerance
Increase in frequency/dosage to achieve euphoria. More physiological changes.

“Baby I compare you to a kiss from a rose on the grey.”

“The more I get of you the stranger it feels.”

G Mixolydian:

I-bVI-bVII-I

I-bVII sus4-bVII-I

DEPENDENCE

Dependence

Total reliance on the substance. Characterized by an inability to function without use.

“You remain my power, my pleasure, my pain...”

“To me you’re like a growing addiction that I can’t deny...”

G Mixolydian:
I-bVI-bVII

The image displays a musical score for the song 'Dependence'. It features a guitar part with three chords: E \flat (chord diagram: 3, x, 3, 2, 1, 0), F (chord diagram: 2, 2, 3, 2, 1, 0), and G (chord diagram: 0, 0, 0, 3, 2, 0). The lyrics are: "to me you're like a grow-ing ad-dic-tion that I can't de - ny." The word "ny." is highlighted in a red box. The score includes a treble clef, a bass clef, and a double bar line at measure 32. The lyrics are written below the guitar staff, and the word "ny." is written below the treble clef staff.

ADDICTION

50

F C/F C Bb F

I've been kissed by a rose— on the grey. (I've

I V V IV I

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a song. It features three staves: a vocal line, a piano accompaniment line, and a bass line. The vocal line starts at measure 50 and contains the lyrics 'I've been kissed by a rose— on the grey. (I've'. Above the vocal line are five guitar chord diagrams: F, C/F (with a triplet '3' and 'xx' above it), C (with an 'x' above it), Bb (with an 'x' above it), and F. Below the piano accompaniment line are five Roman numerals: I, V, V, IV, and I, corresponding to the chords above. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in the right hand, while the bass line has a simple melodic line.

Addiction

DSM-5 classification met;
lifelong changes to
physiological, behavioral,
lifestyle, and emotional
domains.

“I’ve been kissed by a rose
on the grey...”

“And if I should fall, will it all
go away?”

F Major:

I-V-IV-I

TO SUMMARIZE...

Stages of Addiction

Stages of Addiction

Initial Use
First time an addictive substance is used.

Misuse
Regular harmful use of substance. First changes in behavior and physiology.

Tolerance
Increase in frequency/dosage to achieve euphoria. More physiological changes.

Dependence
Total reliance on the substance. Characterized by an inability to function without use.

Addiction
DSM-5 classification met; lifelong changes to physiological, behavioral, lifestyle, and emotional domains.

Harmony Lyrics

"There used to be a greying tower alone on the sea,"
"Love remained a drug that's the high not the pill,"

"Did you know, that when it snows,
my eyes become large and the light that you shine can't be seen?"

"Baby I compare you to a kiss from a rose on the grey."
"The more I get of you the stranger it feels."

"You remain my power, my pleasure, my pain..."
"To me you're like a growing addiction that I can't deny..."

"I've been kissed by a rose on the grey..."
"And if I should fall, will it all go away?"

G Mixolydian:
I-bVI-bVII-I
I-bVII-IV-I

G Aeolian:
I-i-bVI-bVII-bVI-bVII-I

G Mixolydian:
I-bVI-bVII-I
I-bVII sus4-bVII-I

G Mixolydian:
I-bVI-bVII

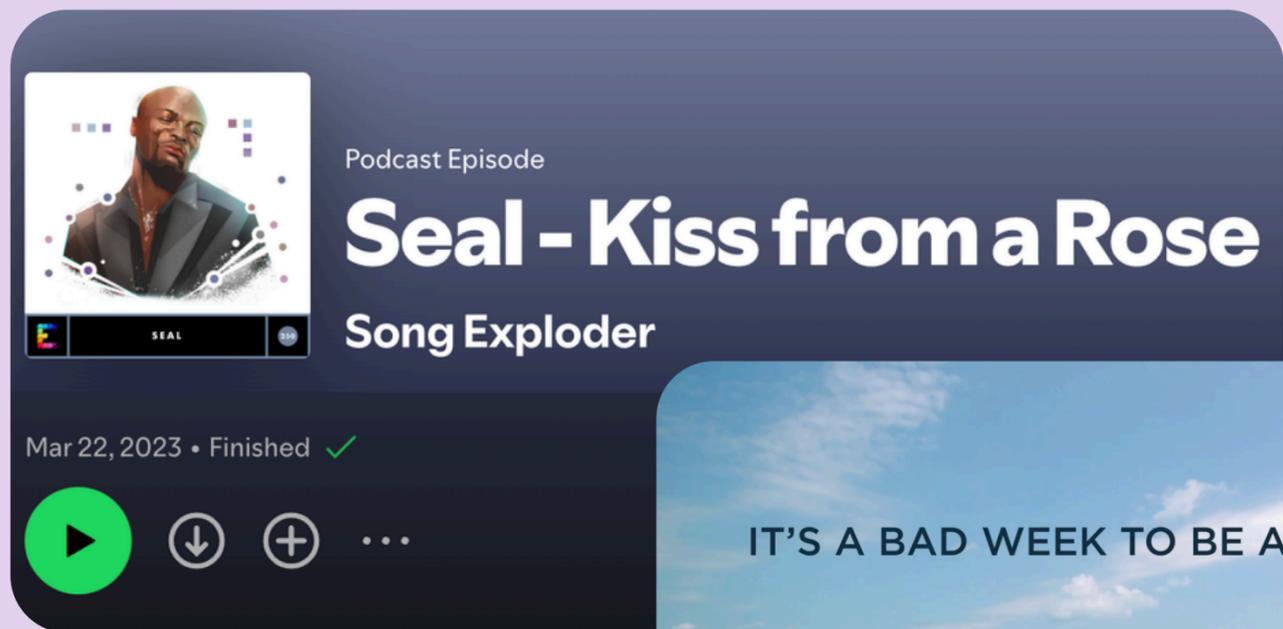
F Major:
I-V-IV-I

“KISS FROM A ROSE” HAS STAYING POWER



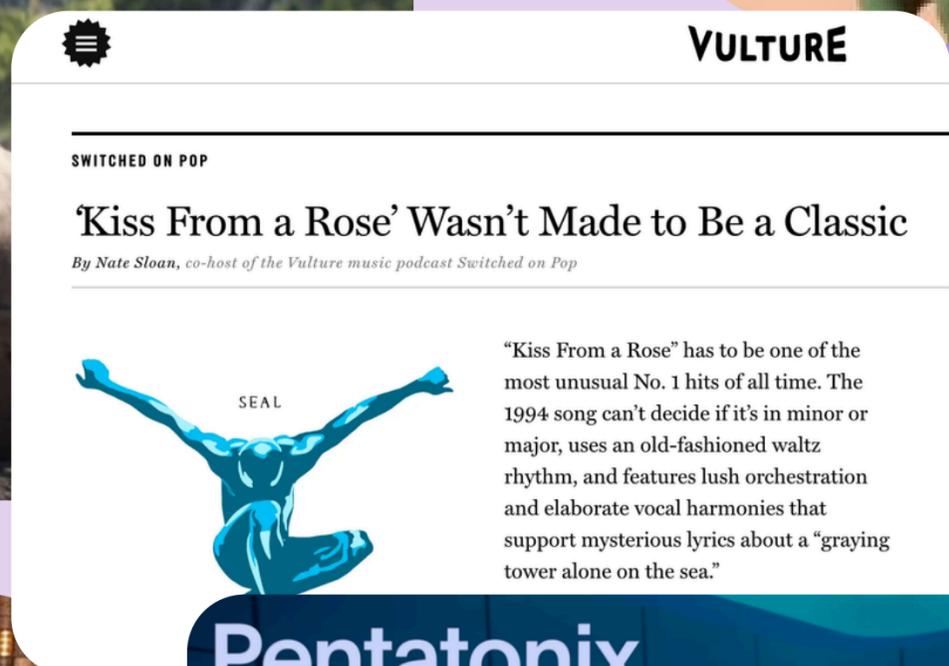
Podcast Episode
'Kiss From a Rose' by Seal (w/ Travis McElroy)
Punch Up The Jam

Jul 4, 2019 • 1 hr 16 min left



Podcast Episode
Seal - Kiss from a Rose
Song Exploder

Mar 22, 2023 • Finished ✓



VULTURE

SWITCHED ON POP

'Kiss From a Rose' Wasn't Made to Be a Classic

By Nate Sloan, co-host of the Vulture music podcast Switched on Pop

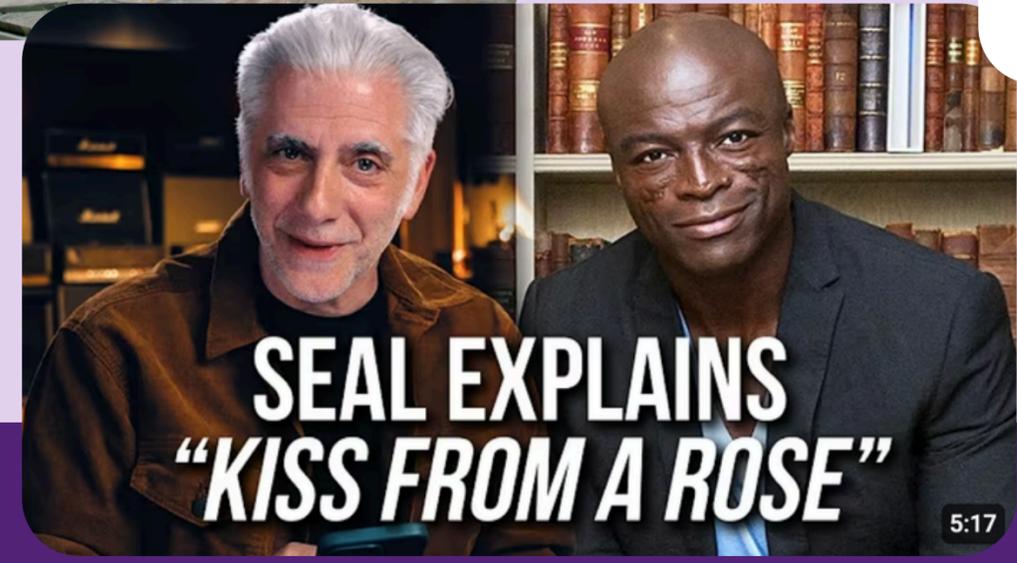


SEAL

"Kiss From a Rose" has to be one of the most unusual No. 1 hits of all time. The 1994 song can't decide if it's in minor or major, uses an old-fashioned waltz rhythm, and features lush orchestration and elaborate vocal harmonies that support mysterious lyrics about a "graying tower alone on the sea."



[SEAL'S "KISS FROM A ROSE" PLAYING OVER SPEAKERS]



SEAL EXPLAINS
"KISS FROM A ROSE"

5:17



Pentatonix
Kiss From a Rose

A Vevo Original Production of
'Kiss From a Rose' by Pentatonix Performing Live
from Vevo Studio Los Angeles CA 2023

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THANK YOU



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PAPER



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