

UNCHAINED MELODIES



BENDING THE BARS TRACK 7 & 8: “Locked Down” & “No Good Deeds”

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

- We will look at two songs from the album Bending the Bars
- First, we will explore the artists of the songs and the song lyrics
- Then, we will take a moment to understand the songs' meanings
- Finally, we will take a moment to pause and reflect on the songs

MEET THE ARTIST

CHANCE

Chance is an artist, a creator, an advocate, and a human who chooses to “walk in love.” Impacted by the criminal punishment system from a young age, Chance watched her family members doing time, and with an older sister in the music industry, Chance turned to music as a form of therapy. Passionate about creativity, Chance expresses herself through poetry, music, drawing, painting, and tattooing, and is the author of Chance: A Second Chance Book Club (Vol 1). A recent graduate of the Miami Media School with a degree in TV and Radio Broadcasting with an additional degree in audio engineering, Chance has produced an audiobook of the first volume of her autobiographical series. “I’m just always evolving,” she says, “and looking to evolve even more.”



THE SONG

LOCKED DOWN

Yeah Yeah, second chance

True story...Tyga got a song called “Bored in the house”

Playing with a basketball, jumping up on his couch

I’m stuck in prison, can’t even go outside

Six feet apart in a 5 by 5

I write the truth and they say the truth hurts
Can't talk to nobody, just ain't worth it
Lies on the TV hypnotize like it's fun and games
Don't play with Yahweh we living in the last days

You with your family or quarantined all alone
I'm stuck behind these bars wishing that I was home
Staring out the window watching the sunset
Peace inside my heart while everyone's upset
One call a week?! We ain't going anywhere
It's a plague in the streets, spiritual warfare
Put aside your pride put up your prayers instead
God's word is the code, don't be so mislead

They had us cuffed up and locked down
But my God set us free so we not now
Cuffed up and locked down
But my God set me free so I'm not now

Every day that you wake up you're blessed
Love every breath cuz you don't know what's next
George Floyd left us with a knee on his neck
Now his family is crying, we screaming "who's next?"

Yeah, yeah, you got a call from an inmate
Where my debit card? lemme get my sis straight
Just dropped another hundred on your books
And I sent a few pics of your boys, take a look, yeah we good
You don't even gotta worry on the hood
I've been staying out of trouble, it's a struggle but we good
And I know you locked up AKon
But you wake up in the morning that's another day gone
Yeah on the real it ain't easy cuz we miss you twin
Reminiscing on the trouble you would get me in
Bad situations really coulda did us in
But we stayed praying so the Lord gives us the win
When the Law came knocking it was him too
Heard the devil laugh hard and he came through and saved you
And yeah I had to take some blame too
But we on a better path and I'm thankful, praise due!

Rest in Power George Floyd and everyone who fell victim to the powers that be
God get the glory, the truth will set you free
Daniel Lewis, Rest in Power
May the Lord give your family strength and comfort
Brandon Roux, you coming home baby
Free Dodo!

WHAT'S THE SONG ABOUT?

Inspired by Nipsey Hustle's "Victory Lap," which Chance listened to every day during the pandemic, LOCKED DOWN emerged from all of the intense emotions of that period. "I had so much inspiration from all the pain," Chance says. "Everything we go through in the struggle of being locked up, it comes out line by line." But LOCKED DOWN isn't just Chance's story; it's also the story of her sister True Akira, who was on the outside getting clean and taking care of Chance's kids. As Chance tells it, "It's a redemption story," and a record of their sisterhood.

MEET THE ARTIST

FLAME

One of ThaFlame's favorite phrases is "Guess what?" capturing his irrepressible curiosity and openness to a world of possibilities. Even as a child, music was his passion, and when he heard commentators on the radio talking about celebrities, he decided that he was going to become famous. "I gotta walk the stage," he says. "People gotta hear what I gotta say. I have a voice." Facing systemic racism and being impacted by the criminal punishment system from a young age, ThaFlame found that reading and travel helped him dream of other possibilities. A Miami artist with a big heart, ThaFlame says, "I love my people, and I want to show my people that everybody got their talent."



THE SONG

NO GOOD DEEDS

No good deeds
I been trying I been trying I been tryina do right
Since I was 15
But it's so hard it's so hard growing up in the hood
Somebody help me
I been tryna do right

It ain't hard doing right - It ain't hard doing right
Just gotta put your mind to it
It's a walk in the park
It's a walk in the park
You just gotta do like night
Had to toss away the dice
Why I'm gambling my life
I got more bad deeds than good
I'm just tryina do right
Cell cold like a freezer
I be frozen at night
Everybody turning plane
Left behind taken flight
True what they say
The dark come to the light
My girl got pregnant stopped my heart
Left it cold on ice
She got me pulling out my dreads
Turtle suit I went psych
Broke a good nigga heart
But when I jump ain't nice
I'm in the box can't sleep
They kick the door all night

They got me eatin the slop
Mash potato no rice
Pray to God I make it home
Seen a nigga get life
Woke up running to the sink
Reminisce about a Sprite
My main man tried to k*** me
Broke bread fed em right
I miss my momma know she's strugglin
Everything will be all right
I shoulda stayed home that night
Throw me in the water with the sharks
Like a dog I'ma bite

No good deeds
I been trying I been trying I been tryina do right
Since I was 15
But it's so hard it's so hard growing up in the hood
Somebody help me
I been tryna do right
I wasn't there I wasn't there as a jit
Took four time to get it right
Ain't no love in these folks
Everybody for they self
I was just on the street
Now I'm up on the shelf
Forgive me if I hurt you
I admit I needed help
Hard headed didn't listen
Right ear out the left
People that thought I went deaf
I wonder how my momma felt
She told me right I went left
Couple times I met death
Moonwalkin' from the reaper
Dirty dancing with the evil
Brought me down I gotta leave ya
Pack my back on the jet
Peace out I'll cya
Bout to see my changed life
Took my love outa people
Put it all in the mic
They watch my story before the like

I'm glad I changed my life
I'm so glad I changed my life

WHAT'S THE SONG ABOUT?

"I want to reach out and touch people," Larrypak says, emphasizing how important human connection is to his musical practice. With this song, he shares about his own battles with mental illness in order to connect with others who can see their lives reflected in his lyrics. "Sharing personal struggles makes me feel like I'm finally telling somebody a secret," he says, describing the sense of relief he feels when he realizes that other people have had similar experiences. In PTSD, Larrypak evokes the fear and pain of post-traumatic stress disorder, a condition that is even more challenging to navigate amid the ongoing trauma of incarceration. This struggle is something shared by so many people behind bars, as well as many people who are not incarcerated. By telling his story and having it understood by others, Larrypak says "it's like I told a secret that everybody had."

TAKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT

1. In “Locked Down,” the artist connects life inside with faith and world events like COVID-19. What details make her story feel real to you?
2. “No Good Deeds” tells a story about trying to change while surrounded by struggle. What line or image stands out most, and why?

