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the only exception lyrics and chords

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Discover the Heartbeat Behind Paramore's "The Only Exception": Lyrics, Chords, and How to Play

When you hear a song that feels like a confession, it's hard not to be drawn into its raw emotion. Paramore's "The Only Exception" is one of those tracks that speaks directly to the heart, weaving vulnerability into a melodic tapestry that's both soothing and powerful. Whether you're a seasoned guitarist, a budding ukulele player, or simply a fan who wants to understand the song's structure, this guide offers a deep dive into the lyrics, chords, and practical tips to bring the track to life on your instrument.

In the following sections, we'll explore:

- The story behind the song and its emotional core.
- A breakdown of the musical structure and key chord progressions.
- Step by step instructions on how to play the verses, chorus, bridge, and outro.
- Tips for beginners and advanced players alike.
- How to adapt the song for guitar, ukulele, and piano.
- Common pitfalls and how to avoid them.
- A practice routine to master the track.

Let's dive in and uncover the secrets that make "The Only Exception" a timeless favorite.

Who is Paramore and How Did "The Only Exception" Come to Life?

Paramore, formed in 2004 in Franklin, Tennessee, has become a defining voice in alternative rock. Their breakthrough album, *Riot!*, introduced audiences to the band's energetic sound, while later releases showcased a more mature, introspective style. "The Only Exception," from the 2013 album *Paramore (self titled)* marks a shift toward a softer, piano driven ballad that highlights lead vocalist Hayley Williams' emotive range.

According to interviews, the song was written during a period of personal transition for Williams. She described it as "a love letter to someone who's willing to let you in when you're scared to be vulnerable." The result is a track that balances gentle instrumentation with lyrical honesty, making it a favorite for acoustic covers and heartfelt performances.

What's the Song About? Themes and Emotional Resonance

At its core, "The Only Exception" explores the paradox of love: the courage to open up versus the fear of rejection. The lyrics paint a picture of a relationship that defies expectations, offering a sanctuary where the protagonist can be herself without pretense. Key themes include:

- Authenticity: The desire to be seen and accepted for who you truly are.
- Trust: Building a safe space where vulnerability is reciprocated.
- Hope: The belief that a meaningful connection can exist even in a world that often feels guarded.

While the chorus repeats the line "I'm not a stranger to the dark side of the moon," the verses delve deeper into the protagonist's inner dialogue, creating a narrative that resonates with listeners who have experienced similar

emotional journeys.

Musical Architecture: Understanding the Song's Structure

"The Only Exception" follows a classic pop rock ballad format, but its arrangement is subtly layered to enhance emotional impact. Here's a quick look at the song's sections:

1. Intro (0:00 0:20): A gentle piano arpeggio sets the tone, followed by a light acoustic guitar strum.
2. Verse 1 (0:21 0:56): The first lyrical segment introduces the central conflict.
3. Pre Chorus (0:57 1:13): A build up that escalates tension, preparing for the chorus.
4. Chorus (1:14 1:53): The emotional climax, featuring a memorable hook.
5. Verse 2 (1:54 2:29): A continuation of the narrative with slight melodic variation.
6. Pre Chorus & Chorus (2:30 3:09): Repetition for reinforcement.
7. Bridge (3:10 3:55): A key change that adds depth before the final chorus.
8. Final Chorus & Outro (3:56 4:30): A soaring, layered finish that fades into a soft piano finish.

Musically, the song is set in the key of G major, using a moderate tempo of 72 BPM. The chord progression is both familiar and emotionally resonant, making it accessible to guitarists of all skill levels.

Chord Overview: The Building Blocks

Below is a concise list of the primary chords used throughout the track. These chords are the foundation for the verses, pre chorus, chorus, bridge, and outro.

- G Major (G) – Root chord, bright and open.
- D Major (D) – Adds a sense of lift and forward motion.
- Em (E minor) – Provides a subtle melancholy feel.
- C Major (C) – Offers resolution and warmth.
- Am (A minor) – Adds tension before resolving to G.
- Bm (B minor) – Used sparingly in the bridge for a dramatic shift.

For guitarists, the following chord shapes are recommended:

1. G: 320033
2. D: xx0232
3. Em: 022000
4. C: x32010
5. Am: x02210
6. Bm: x24432 (barre) or x24232 (simplified)

Verse Breakdown: Chords and Progression

The verses use a simple yet effective progression that mirrors the lyrical introspection:

G – D – Em – C
G – D – Em – C

Each line is played over two measures, creating a steady rhythmic foundation. The strumming pattern for the verse is a gentle 8 beat rhythm:

- Down, Down, Up, Up, Down, Up
- Repeat for each chord.

This pattern keeps the focus on the vocal line while maintaining harmonic support.

Pre Chorus: Building Momentum

In the pre chorus, the chord progression shifts to introduce tension:

Am – G – D – C
Am – G – D – C

The strumming becomes slightly more dynamic, emphasizing the “feel” of the music. A recommended pattern:

- Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up
- Focus on the transition from Am to G for a smooth flow.

Chorus: The Emotional Apex

The chorus is the most memorable part of the song, using a progression that lifts the emotional stakes:

G – D – Em – C
G – D – Em – C

Repeat this progression for each chorus line. The strumming pattern here is more forceful to match the lyrical intensity:

- Down, Down, Down, Down, Down, Down
- Keep the rhythm steady; let the chords ring out.

For advanced players, consider adding a palm muted intro to the chorus to create contrast before the full strum.

Bridge: A Key Change That Adds Depth

The bridge introduces a key shift to Bm, adding a fresh emotional layer:

Bm – Am – D – G
Bm – Am – D – G

Use a more subdued strumming pattern here to contrast with the chorus. A common approach is:

- Down, Down, Up, Up, Down, Up
- Emphasize the Bm chord to create a subtle lift.

After the bridge, the song returns to the original key for the final chorus, providing a satisfying resolution.

Outro: Closing with Grace

The outro mirrors the intro’s gentle piano arpeggios, with a final strum of the G chord to bring the song to a soft close. A simple pattern works well:

- Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up
- Let the final G chord sustain.

How to Play “The Only Exception” on Guitar: A Step by Step Guide

Below is a detailed, beginner friendly guide to help you master the track. We’ll cover:

1. Choosing the right capo placement.
2. Strumming patterns for each section.
3. Fingerpicking options for a more intimate rendition.
4. Common mistakes and how to correct them.

Capo Placement and Key Transposition

The original key of G major is comfortable for most guitarists. However, if you prefer a higher or lower vocal range, consider placing a capo:

- Capo on 2nd fret: Transposes the song to A major, raising the pitch.
- Capo on 4th fret: Transposes the song to B major, giving a brighter tone.

When using a capo, keep the chord shapes the same but play them as if they were in the original key.

Strumming Patterns for Each Section

- Intro/Verse: Light 8 beat pattern – Down, Down, Up, Up, Down, Up.
- Pre Chorus: Slightly more aggressive – Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up.

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