

# **'And Dream of Love'**

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## **INT. STEFAN'S BEDROOM - DREAM**

We open on a bright, airy bedroom draped in comforting light. A young man lays in his bed, swamped by the warm colours surrounding him. This is **STEFAN**; eyes closed, mouth shut in a content smile who with flushed cheeks, is holding another man around his age in a hug under the covers.

His partner shuffles a bit, bringing his hand onto **STEFAN's** face. **STEFAN** brings his own hand to meet his partners, cupping it gently.

CUT TO:

## **INT. STEFAN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING**

**STEFAN's** eyes open. His gaze lands on the emptiness occupying the space next to him in his bed. His hand slowly drops from his face as he stares longingly at this space next to him. He rolls onto his back and stares at the ceiling, letting out a sigh of discontent.

A memory about today clicks in his head. Pulling himself out from his dreary state he pulls off his duvet cover and gets out of bed.

**STEFAN** has a look of disdain on his face as he skims through his wardrobe trying to find an outfit to match the occasion. He ends up standing in front of his mirror in his chosen outfit. A look of uncertainty crosses his face as he styles his hair to one side. He looks at himself in the mirror, rolls his eyes and tries to make his hair go back the opposite way.

His hair refusing to do what he wanted, **STEFAN** huffs and glares at himself in the mirror. He looks back into the mirror and tries out the smile he's going to give his date.

CUT TO:

**INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON**

**STEFAN** sits at a table with his date. We don't see much of the other man as **STEFAN** places his elbow on the table and supports his chin from beneath with his hand, staring at his date with undivided attention.

The couple share a laugh and **STEFAN** steals a hopeful look at his date as he takes a sip from his drink.

CUT TO:

**EXT. CAFE - AFTERNOON**

**STEFAN** embraces his date in a hug, which his date accepts a bit too awkwardly, not the hugging type. **STEFAN** smiles, shuffling his feet nervously and shooting a glance at the ground.

He steps out of the hug and gives the man a shy smile. His date nods and begins to head off. **STEFAN** gives a shy wave and begins walking in the opposite direction - and tries to look back without drawing too much attention to himself.

He catches the eye of his date who has also turned around. **STEFAN** smiles again, his eyes a little more animated than before. His date gives a small wave similar to **STEFAN's** earlier one and continues walking away from him.

**STEFAN** turns around continuing to head away, this time at a quicker pace staring at his feet, flustered. He lifts his head back up, a small, hopeful smile on his face and a little more life behind his eyes.

CUT TO:

**INT. STEFAN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

**STEFAN** stands outside his friend's bedroom door, and politely knocks on it. After a moment a murmured response is heard from inside the room. **STEFAN** opens the door and heads in.

CUT TO:

**INT. MARIE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON**

**STEFAN** lies on his back across the bottom of **MARIE's** tidy bed, gushing about his date. **MARIE** sits near the top, listening but wearing a knowing look - she's seen this before.

**STEFAN**

So I think it went really well. I didn't do anything too awkward for once. We went to the cafe in town, chatted and just had a good time. And he said he thought I was really funny, and that he'd love to meet again -

**MARIE**

But will he?

This silences **STEFAN**. He lies down, his arms dropping to his side, hurt etched on his face. She realises she was a bit harsh.

**MARIE**

Sorry, Stefan I didn't mean to... Look. It's been like this the last year. First date after first date, all with promises to meet again and -

**STEFAN**

(Avoiding eye contact) And what?

**MARIE** sighs and crosses her arms, staring at **STEFAN**.

**MARIE**

I don't mean this in a bad way but... you haven't been on another date with any of these people. They all make their promises and never follow up.

**STEFAN** sits up and stares. He knows what **MARIE** is saying is true, but there's still hope.

**MARIE (CONT)**

I can see what's going on, and I think you do too, you just don't want to admit it. I'm getting tired of seeing you get excited about some new *amazing* guy and then -

**STEFAN**

This guy is different though! I  
really felt that we had something  
when we were talking -

**MARIE** silences **STEFAN** with a knowing stare. **STEFAN** considers.  
His shoulders drop and he looks away from **MARIE**, and lies back  
down.

**MARIE**

(Gently) I don't want to see you keep  
getting hurt like this. Maybe just...  
take a break from dating for a bit.  
If not for yourself, for me.

**MARIE** lies down beside him. **STEFAN** nods, still avoiding  
looking at **MARIE** so she can't see him struggling to stop  
crying.

CUT TO:

**INT. STEFAN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

**STEFAN** leaves **MARIE**'s room, typing out a message on Tinder to  
his date from earlier.

CUT TO:

**INT. STEFAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**STEFAN** lays on his bed covers, scrolling through his phone. He  
opens Tinder and checks for a response to his message.

There is no response to his text. He gets out of bed and slips  
into some more loose fitting clothes in preparation for  
sleeping. He climbs back under his covers and checks his phone  
lock screen. No new notifications.

Sighing, **STEFAN** grabs his laptop and props himself up in bed.  
His YouTube watch list loads up and he scrolls through it for  
a bit before a video titled 'ASMR boyfriend' catches his eye.  
He clicks on it, intrigued.

CUT TO:

**INT. STUDIO - ASMR VIDEO**

The video opens on a black screen, before a man around  
**STEFAN**'s age in front of a sparkly and softly coloured

background slowly fades into focus. Soothing music wafts through the air.

**GOODNIGHT WHISPERS**

Hi there... How are you? I hope your days have been good.

CUT TO:

**INT. STEFAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**STEFAN** studies the screen carefully, unsure of what to make of this video. He shrugs his shoulders and closes his laptop lid, pulls his covers up close and rolls over into sleep.

CUT TO:

**INT. STEFAN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING**

**STEFAN** wakes slowly, recovering from a decent night's sleep. A thought crosses his mind and his hands shoot across to where his phone lays next to his bed. He checks his lockscreen, a hopeful smile on his face. No new notifications.

**STEFAN's** smile drops, as does his hands holding the phone, down to his chest. He lays in silence, stifling a sniffle and rubbing his eyes. He props himself up again, grabbing his laptop and opening it. The video he started to watch last night is still open on his screen. Still somewhat intrigued, **STEFAN** hits his space bar to continue playing the video.

CUT TO:

**INT. STUDIO - ASMR VIDEO**

**GOODNIGHT WHISPERS** continues from where **STEFAN** paused the video. He seems genuinely happy to be 'talking' to **STEFAN**.

**GOODNIGHT WHISPERS**

Was it good? Good. So what was the best and worst part of your day? Worst part first. Well, I'm glad your home. I missed you.

CUT TO:

**INT. STEFAN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING**

**STEFAN** tilts his head slightly to one side and a small smile starts to form upon hearing this compliment.

**GOODNIGHT WHISPERS (FROM VIDEO)**

What else did I miss? Well, there's  
your smile, I've missed it so much.  
And your little laugh. I miss hearing  
that.

**STEFAN** finds himself nodding in response to **GOODNIGHT WHISPERS**, and blushes a little at the mention of more praise. **STEFAN** continues to smile and respond to what **GOODNIGHT WHISPERS** is saying.

**STEFAN** curiously clicks on **GOODNIGHT WHISPERS** channel, and begins to scroll through his list of many uploads. **STEFAN's** phone buzzes, and he flings himself across his bed to pick up his phone. He checks his lock screen. One new notification. It's spam email.

**STEFAN** furrows his brow and unlocks his phone, opening up Tinder. He goes to check the date he messaged yesterday, only to discover that he's been blocked. **STEFAN** throws his phone across his bed and slumps onto his back staring up at the ceiling, this time letting his tears run freely. As he lays there, he clicks on another of **GOODNIGHT WHISPERS** videos. **STEFAN** rolls over onto one side and starts watching intently, wiping his tears away with a hand.

CUT TO:

**INT. STEFAN'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT**

**STEFAN** has spent the whole day watching through nearly all of **GOODNIGHT WHISPERS** YouTube channel. He struggles to stay awake as another video starts playing. He blinks a few times before passing out completely.

CUT TO:

**INT. ASMR STUDIO - DREAM**

**STEFAN** opens his eyes to find himself inside the same setup that **GOODNIGHT WHISPERS** uses for all their videos. The same music from the videos wafts around him. Before he can say anything the background changes.

CUT TO:

**INT. STEFAN'S BEDROOM - DREAM**

**STEFAN** lies within the same dream he had a couple nights ago, draped in warm colours, a smile across his face.

He is once again holding another man close to him in a hug, we still cannot see who it is.

**STEFAN** shuffles a bit in content, making his partner roll over and face him. **STEFAN** smiles and embraces him tighter, burying his face in his shoulder.

A beeping noise is heard far off, and although barely recognisable at first it grows in volume and intensity until it echoes around the entire dream.

**STEFAN** refuses to open his eyes, but as the volume increases even more he opens one eye just a little bit and he then wakes up.

CUT TO:

**INT. STEFAN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING**

His phone alarm blaring, **STEFAN** wakes up with a start in the same position he was holding **GOODNIGHT WHISPERS** in. As usual, the space next to him is only occupied by his laptop, its battery drained. **STEFAN** struggles to locate his phone, stumbling amongst his covers till he finds his phone and turns off the alarm.

**STEFAN** stretches and pulls himself out of bed, setting himself on the floor instead. Checking his phone as he does so. No new notifications. **STEFAN**'s shoulders hang low again as he stares at the empty phone screen. He gazes back at his bed. He sighs, wiping a hand across his face.

**STEFAN** crawls back into bed, and lays facing the black screen of his laptop. He stares into it and can see his reflection on the screen staring back at him. He unlocks his phone and brings up **MARIE**'s number. He dials it. It rings, and he gets a muffled, half awake response.

**STEFAN**

Marie, I... I don't think I'm going to go into uni today. I'm not feeling well. Sorry.

Despite **MARIE**'s muffled protests, he hangs up before she can form a proper sentence. He stares back at his laptop. After a moment, he gets up from his bed.

CUT TO:

**INT. STEFAN'S BEDROOM - MONTAGE**

A montage of **STEFAN** building a fort out of sheets and blankets. He throws pillows inside for him to sit on, grabs his laptop charger and plugs it into his laptop. As the screen lights up once again with power going through it, **STEFAN** eagerly places some headphones over his ears, plugging those into his laptop too.

He loads up **GOODNIGHT WHISPERS** YouTube page and continues watching the next video from where he left off. There are many shots throughout the next few hours of **STEFAN** laughing and giggling along with **GOODNIGHT WHISPERS**, nodding solemnly in agreement or just bashful nodding in response to a compliment.

By the end of the cuts, **STEFAN** has his face almost touching the screen of his laptop. He stares intently at **GOODNIGHT WHISPERS**, blurred in his vision simply by how close he is. His breath is hitting the laptop screen.

**GOODNIGHT WHISPERS (FROM VIDEO)**

Of course I missed you, my days have  
been boring without you. I missed  
your silly jokes that always make me  
laugh. Remember, I love you and I!  
I'll be here when you need me...

**STEFAN** giggles and pulls himself back from the screen. He pauses the video and looks left, then right. He grins and leans back into the screen, hitting play again. His face and lips are inches from the screen. He closes his eyes, lost in the moment.

A heavy banging on his bedroom door distracts him from the video.

**MARIE (THROUGH THE DOOR)**

Stefan??! You still alive in there?  
We haven't heard from you for days.



**STEFAN** waits a moment, ignoring **MARIE**. The banging stops briefly and **STEFAN** turns back to his screen until - BANG. **MARIE** continues knocking against the door.

**MARIE (THROUGH THE DOOR)**

STEFAN! I can hear your music  
playing, open the door.

**STEFAN** sits back, dazed. **MARIE**'s consistent banging plays through his mind. He finally comes to his senses and pulls himself out of his pillow fort. He cracks his door open a couple inches, and is greeted with **MARIE**'s face.

**MARIE**

Care to explain what the *fuck* is  
going on?

**STEFAN** rubs his face.

**STEFAN**

(Unconvincingly) I've been... Ill?

**MARIE** scoffs and tries to push past **STEFAN** into his room. He holds firm. **MARIE** glares at him.

**MARIE**

Stefan. Let me in.

**STEFAN** refuses to budge.

**MARIE (CONT)**

What are you hiding?

**STEFAN**

Nothing!

**MARIE** fixes him with a stare. She steps back slightly, and **STEFAN** relaxes. As he does so, **MARIE** launches herself at him and breaks through into his room. She sees the pillow fort. Turning, she raises an eyebrow at **STEFAN**.

**STEFAN** sighs, defeated. He walks over to his bed and sits down, his head sinking into his hands.

**STEFAN**

I know this looks like I'm crazy, but  
I'm not. It's just...

He trails off. **MARIE** approaches and sits next to him, concern etched across her face.

**MARIE**

(Gently) What is it?

**STEFAN** looks up from his hands at **MARIE**, on the verge of tears.

**STEFAN**

It's... I don't understand why every  
guy I've ever had feelings for just  
doesn't feel the same as I do.

**MARIE** looks at **STEFAN**. She doesn't really know what to say.

**STEFAN (CONT)**

I used to think it was just sort of  
like fate you know? That I hadn't met  
'the one' yet. But I feel like I'm  
going round in circles and it's the  
same with every *single* guy I meet.

(He wipes a tear from his cheek)  
It's got to be me right? I mean look  
at me. I see it in the eyes of every  
date I go on. The little look of 'Oh,  
he's not a skinny twink covered with  
dimples'

(He looks down at his hands)  
I don't fit into the mould of the  
perfect boyfriend to show off to  
family and friends, so they don't

bother with me. And I guess they have a point. I wouldn't want to date me. So why would they?

**STEFAN** and **MARIE** sit in silence. **STEFAN** silently sobs as his crying becomes less easy to control. **MARIE** places a hand on **STEFAN**'s back.

**MARIE**

Stefan... I noticed you'd been down but I didn't realise how bad it was... But listen.

(She pulls his hands into her lap)

You don't need to fit into a mould. If they were going to make you fit into one then they're not loving you for who you are, and you're the most amazing, loving person I know -

(**STEFAN** looks at her and grins)

**MARIE (CONT)**

And you should be loved for all of that. And don't settle for anything less, because when you find someone who loves you just the way you are...

(She lets go of his hands and gently cups his face with her hands)

Maybe then you'll stop complaining to me about it.

They both share a laugh which ends in a comfortable silence. **STEFAN** considers. He hugs **MARIE**. They both lie down together.

**STEFAN**

Thank you so much.

**MARIE**

It's okay.

**MARIE** gets up from the bed and navigates past the pillow fort to the door. She stops as she's halfway out the door.

**MARIE**

But seriously maybe avoid dating for a bit? Break that cycle you're stuck in. Learn to love yourself a bit more before trying to love someone else.

**STEFAN** smiles briefly and gives a small nod to **MARIE**. She returns the smile and leaves, closing the door behind her. **STEFAN** sits alone on his bed for a moment, before going to his pillow fort, scooping up some pillows and returning them to his bed.

As he places them back where they belong, his phone buzzes. He pulls it out from what remains of the pillow fort. It's a notification from Tinder. One new match & message.

He stares at it in disbelief. He looks back at the closed door. Conflicted, he stares harder at the notification. Should he listen to **MARIE**?

He considers, before holding down his finger on the app. He deletes it. He pockets his phone and goes back to his mirror. He looks at his reflection in the mirror. He smiles at himself.

**CREDITS**

