

Twelve Carat Toothache

As of 2022, Post Malone finds himself in this awkward point of limbo between rapper, pop star, and singer/songwriter, and it bleeds over into his music. From a fan's point of view, it feels like Post is in a transitional phase equivalent to puberty. And like most things people do during puberty, this album is cringy, overly emotional, and will hopefully be forgotten by people in a few years.

12-carat toothache is a massive drop in quality from his previous albums. From vapid and nonsensically edgy lyrics to songs that feel like padding, the album is a slog to get through, with the deluxe version spanning 16 tracks and nearly reaching 50 minutes. Of those 16 songs, only a small handful are memorable and noteworthy in any capacity. On songs like "Reputation" and "Lemon Tree", he fashions himself as this Bojack Horseman-type character who is wrought on self-destruction via alcohol and drugs, and sees himself as incapable of change. The only issue with that is he conveys his state of mind with the most god-awful lyrics, with "In every film I watch I'm on the side of the bad guy" as a notable (and ridiculous) example.

"Cooped up" is the musical equivalent of white bread. Inoffensive, bland, and something we've seen a hundred times before. Posty sticks to his formula of singing about getting drunk in designer clothes. While this is normally a winning formula, something went terribly wrong, mainly the awkward pseudo-reggae beat and the Roddy Rich feature. As of 2022, Roddy Rich has earned the title of "one-hit wonder turned has been" and bringing him onto this track reinforces why he has no longevity. Auto crooning is no longer unique and there are artists who do it far better than Roddy. Like many other tracks, it feels like Malone is trying too hard to create the song of the summer.

Since blowing up, Post has felt pressure (from his label and from himself) to constantly create hits. To constantly make the next "White Iverson" or "rockstar." His biggest issue is that he's not making music for himself. He's trying too hard to recapture his world-dominating fame from 4 years ago. And given the lyrics and subject matter of songs on this album, that struggle is eating away at him. He needs to make music for nobody else besides himself.

The main failing of Twelve Carat Toothache can be blamed on Malone's label. During the height of the pandemic in 2020, Malone stated that he was not motivated to make music. In 2021, Post's manager Dre London said that he and Post agreed with the label to put out two projects that year, which never happened. In January of this year, London confirmed that Twelve Carat Toothache was ready to be released but was being purposefully delayed by the label. Post Malone is a prime example of how even the biggest stars in the world can be screwed over by a bad deal with a label. When adding a global pandemic to the equation, it's easy to see why this album was destined to fail from the beginning.

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