

# TUNE INTO ENGLISH Blondie's Heart of Glass



Il gruppo *new wave* newyorkese ripropone per il suo terzo album una canzone dimenticata in un cassetto che diventa il suo più grande successo.

When New York punk-rock band Blondie needed material for their 1978 album "Parallel Lines", they dug up<sup>1</sup> one of the first songs they had written four years earlier. It was a controversial change of genre: they considered the song a novelty and jokingly called it "the Disco Song". Singer and co-writer Debbie Harry later told British newspaper *The Guardian* that disco "wasn't too cool in our social set<sup>2</sup>. But we wanted to be uncool."

Harry and guitarist Chris Stein were a couple at the time, and they wrote the song in the dingy<sup>3</sup> New York City loft they shared in a downtrodden<sup>4</sup> district called The Bowery. "The lyrics", Harry later claimed, "weren't about anyone. They were just a plaintive<sup>5</sup> moan<sup>6</sup> about lost love." The singer reflects on a failed<sup>7</sup> love affair using the past simple, then acknowledging<sup>8</sup>, in the present simple and continuous, that between relationships she has found peace.

Stein came up with<sup>9</sup> the title *Heart of Glass* when the band's producer insisted on changing the original second line "a pain in the ass<sup>10</sup>" to something less vulgar. The expression was cut from the US single, but was simply moved to the end of the UK version — and bleeped<sup>11</sup> when played on the BBC! It became one of the biggest-selling singles in history and one of the band's signature songs<sup>12</sup>, launching them into the mainstream. The Grammy Hall of Fame lists it as a recording of "qualitative or historical significance" and Harry has said it is the song she is "proudest of having written<sup>13</sup>." ☒



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## GLOSSARY

- 1 **to dig up:** scavare, sterrare
- 2 **social set:** contesto sociale
- 3 **dingy:** misero, squallido
- 4 **downtrodden:** disagiato
- 5 **plaintive:** lamentoso
- 6 **moan:** gemito
- 7 **failed:** fallito
- 8 **to acknowledge:** riconoscere
- 9 **to come up with:** inventare, ideare
- 10 **a pain in the ass:** rompipalle
- 11 **to bleep:** mettere il bip sopra a, bippare
- 12 **signature songs:** canzoni più rappresentative
- 13 **to be the proudest of having written:** essere più orgogliosa di aver scritto
- 14 **to turn out:** risultare
- 15 **mistrust:** sfiducia
- 16 **enjoyable:** piacevole
- 17 **to lose one's mind:** perdere la testa
- 18 **turmoil:** tumulto, subbuglio
- 19 **annoyance:** fastidio
- 20 **to tease:** prendere in giro
- 21 **bluish:** bluastro
- 22 **exhilarated:** euforico

**gas:** slang for great fun.

**soon turned out had a heart of glass:** this sentence omits the subject twice: "(It) soon turned out (he) had a heart of glass."

**mucho:** this song was heavily influenced by Euro-disco, so the band decided to include this Spanish word.

**made it cruising:** the idiom to make it means to succeed, cruising means easily and enjoyably.



Scan this QR code with your smartphone or tablet and listen to the official song on YouTube while reading the lyrics.

Once I had a love and it was a **gas**,  
Soon **turned out**<sup>14</sup> had a heart of glass  
Seemed like **the real thing**, only to find  
**Mucho** mistrust<sup>15</sup>, love's gone behind

Once I had a love and it was **divine**  
Soon found out I was **losing my mind**<sup>17</sup>  
It seemed like the real thing, but I was so blind  
Mucho mistrust, love's gone behind

In between  
What I find is pleasing and I'm feeling fine  
Love is so confusing there's no **peace of mind**  
If I fear I'm losing you. it's just no good  
You **teasing**<sup>20</sup> like you do

Once I had a love and it was a gas  
Soon turned out had a heart of glass  
Seemed like the real thing, only to find  
Mucho mistrust, love's gone behind

Lost inside  
Adorable illusion and I cannot hide  
I'm the one you're using, please **don't push me aside**  
**We coulda made it cruising**, yeah

La, da, da, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la  
La, da, da, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la  
La, da, da, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la  
Yeah, **riding high** on love's true **bluish**<sup>21</sup> light

Ooh, oh, ooh, oh  
Ooh, oh, ooh, oh

Once I had a love and it was a gas  
Soon turned out had a heart of glass  
Seemed like the real thing only to find  
Mucho mistrust, love's gone behind

In between  
What I find is pleasing and I'm feeling fine  
Love is so confusing there's no peace of mind  
If I fear I'm losing you it's just no good  
You teasing like you do

La, da, da, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la  
La, da, da, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la  
La, da, da, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la  
La, da, da, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la  
La, da, da, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la  
La, da, da, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la

**the real thing:** something genuine and of high quality, as opposed to an inferior imitation.

**divine:** although this word means 'godlike', it is often used to describe something as very **enjoyable**<sup>16</sup>.

**peace of mind:** the absence of mental **turmoil**<sup>18</sup> or **annoyance**<sup>19</sup>.

**don't push me aside:** to ignore or refuse to think about something or someone.

**riding high:** an idiom meaning to be doing very well as well as **exhilarated**<sup>22</sup>.

Fergal Kavanagh runs the website [www.tuneintoenglish.com](http://www.tuneintoenglish.com), the web's largest free resource for learning English through pop music.

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