

TUNE INTO ENGLISH

# Madonna's Like a Virgin



Madonna Louise Ciccone ha recurrido a menudo al imaginario católico para crearse esa reputación provocadora que la ha convertido en una estrella global del pop. Las alusiones sexuales en uno de sus primeros éxitos son más que evidentes.

Probably her best-known song, *Like A Virgin* propelled<sup>1</sup> American singer Madonna to superstardom. She was already successful as a pop artist, but this song also appealed<sup>2</sup> to rock fans and became her first No.1 single, listed on *Rolling Stone's* "100 Greatest Pop Songs". Madonna, the granddaughter<sup>3</sup> of Italian immigrants on her father's side, performed the song at the 1984 MTV Video Awards, seven weeks before its release<sup>4</sup>. Dancing around the stage in a wedding dress, she gave a performance which is considered one of the most iconic pop performances of all time, and it turned the singer into a household<sup>5</sup> name. Coupled<sup>6</sup> with a video filmed in Venice in Italy, the song caused controversy with its provocative theme; some listeners regarded<sup>7</sup> it as blasphemous. Lyrically the song is very simple, mostly in the past simple. 'Like' here is a preposition, meaning 'similar to'. Madonna said: "I liked the play on words<sup>8</sup>; I thought they were clever<sup>9</sup>. They're so geeky<sup>10</sup>, they're cool. I certainly wasn't a virgin, and, by the way, how can you be like a virgin?" Nile Rodgers, famous for his 1970s disco hits with Chic, produced the album of the same name. For the debut single

he borrowed<sup>11</sup> the bassline<sup>12</sup> from *The Four Tops' I Can't Help Myself*<sup>13</sup> (1965) and recorded all the instruments live, emphasising the drums<sup>14</sup>. He expressed surprise at the song's success: "I thought that every song on that album was better than that single. I was shocked at how well it did<sup>15</sup>." ☺



SCAN, READ & LISTEN  
07

LOWER INTERMEDIATE B1

### GLOSSARY

- 1 to propel: catapultare
- 2 to appeal: attrarre
- 3 granddaughter: nipote
- 4 release: lancio
- 5 household: familiare
- 6 to couple: accoppiare
- 7 to regard: considerare
- 8 play on words: gioco di parole
- 9 clever: intelligenti
- 10 geeky: nerd
- 11 to borrow: prendere in prestito
- 12 bassline: linea di basso
- 13 I can't help myself: non posso evitarlo
- 14 drums: batteria
- 15 to do well: funzionare
- 16 to trick: ingannare
- 17 to fade: svanire
- 18 bold: audace
- 19 to thaw out: scongelare
- 20 to melt: sciogliere
- 21 to hide: nascondere



I made it through: this phrase means 'to survive an ordeal'.

didn't know / been saving / feels so good inside: songs often incorrectly omit the subject.

I'd been had: this is an example of the past perfect. 'To be had' means 'to be tricked'<sup>16</sup>.

gonna: an often used abbreviation in spoken English of 'going to'.

'cause: an often used abbreviation in spoken English of 'because'.

fine: this adjective is often used to mean 'good-looking'.

can't you hear my heart beat: a question using the negative modal of 'can'. Note the difference between 'heart beat' and 'heartbeat' earlier in the song. The former is a noun + verb, the latter is a noun.

I made it through the wilderness

Somehow I made it through

Didn't know how lost I was

Until I found you

I was beat, incomplete

I'd been had, I was sad and blue

But you made me feel

Yeah, you made me feel

Shiny and new (Hoo)

Like a virgin

Touched for the very first time

Like a virgin

When your heart beats next to mine

Gonna give you all my love, boy

My fear is fading<sup>17</sup> fast

Been saving it all for you

'Cause only love can last

You're so fine and you're mine

Make me strong, yeah you make me bold<sup>18</sup>

Oh your love thawed out<sup>19</sup>

Yeah, your love thawed out

What was scared and cold

Like a virgin, hey

Touched for the very first time

Like a virgin

With your heartbeat next to mine

Whoa, whoa, ah, whoa

You're so fine and you're mine

I'll be yours 'til the end of time

'Cause you made me feel

Yeah, you made me feel

I've nothing to hide<sup>21</sup>

Like a virgin, hey

Touched for the very first time

Like a virgin

With your heartbeat next to mine

Like a virgin, oohoo

Like a virgin

Feels so good inside

When you hold me

And your heart beats

And you love me

Oh oh, oh

Ooh, baby, yeah

Can't you hear my heart beat for the very first time?

somehow: this means 'in some way'.

beat: this adjective is often incorrectly used for 'beaten'.

blue: this means 'to feel sad'.

what was: 'what' here refers to 'the thing', so his love melted<sup>20</sup> the thing that was scared and cold (her heart).

'til: an often used abbreviation in spoken English of 'until'.

SCAN & WATCH



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



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