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The Last of the Blonde Bombshells

By Alan Plater

I hate those stories
that begin with a funeral.
I'm afraid this one started
the day we buried George.
Not that we buried him.
In the interests of the environment,
we had him incinerated.
My children conducted the service.
They believe in the environment.
They don't believe in priests or vicars.
Our father died playing golf.
On the long 15th,
but right in the middle of the fairway.
We thank him for being a terrific father...
...and grandfather.
It was his wish that we invite you all...
...to raise a glass to his memory
in the clubhouse after the ceremony.
It was also his wish
that he should leave us accompanied...
...by some of the music he loved best.
"For I am the pirate king
"And it is, it is
A glorious thing to be a pirate king
"For I am the pirate king
"And it is, it is
A glorious thing to be a pirate king"
- Are you all right?
- As well as can be expected.
If you want to cry, go ahead.
I just hate this fucking tune.
"I'll be glad when you're gone
You rascal, you
"I'll be glad when you're gone
You rascal, you
"When you're dead in your grave
"No more women will you crave
"I'll be glad when you're gone
"Glad when you're gone
"Glad when you're gone
You rascal, you"
Can't hang about.
Apparently, they have one of these
every 20 minutes at this time of year.

- Well, who's going to tell her?

- I'll go.

What was that about the music?

Well, when I was 15,

we lived near a dance hall...

...and there was a band.

And some girls used to sing a song called...

I'll Be Glad When You're Dead

You Rascal, You.

Never heard of it.

When they started to play that

rubbish in the crematorium...

...I shut my ears and that's what I heard.

I'll Be Glad When You're Dead

You Rascal, You.

I got a fit of the giggles,

and I'm very ashamed.

Was grandpa a rascal?

No.

He was anything but.

- You may disagree, but...

- No, I know what you mean.

But he was kind, wasn't he?

I mean, he would always pat me

on the head and give me a pound.

You and me both, sweetheart.

You all right now?

Can you cope with the wake?

Of course I can, dear.

Lead me to the golfers.

This is the BBC General Forces Program.

London suffered the heaviest bombardment
since the 1940-'41 Blitz last night...

...in German air raids over the capital.

About 175 enemy planes made

scattered and indiscriminate attacks...

...on London, the counties,

southeast England and East Anglia.

The Last of the

BLONDE BOMBSHELLS

- There you are, keep the change.

- Have a good day.

So, have you made any plans, Mum?

I think I'll go for the creme brulee.

Oh, no.
I didn't mean about the pudding.
I meant...
Oh, life after death.
Well, yes, I suppose so.
Life goes on much as it did
when your father was alive.
I still go to the library twice a week.
I still watch the quiz programs
on television.
Sometimes I get the answers right.
I go out every Thursday with my children
to some trendy restaurant.
And I weep when necessary.
And I look after Joanna when
her parents want to expand their horizons.
That's enough life
for a woman half my age.
Can you have her on Friday?
We've got tickets to The Magic Flute.
Fine, I'll cancel my darts night.
You don't play darts.
Isn't that lovely?
What?
If your pulse doesn't quicken when you
hear Hoagy Carmichael's Stardust...
...then I've clearly failed as a mother.
Thank you for lunch, my children.
I'll see you next Thursday.
Do you think she's turning into
a dotty old woman?
She's always done it.
You talk to her, she makes the right
noises but she's not listening.
She's listening to what's inside her head.
Whatever she's listening to now
is just a bit further away.
You're much too young
to know those tunes.
What makes you think I know them?
You screwed up the changes
into the middle eight.
It was a good try.
You some sort of critic?

No, don't worry.
It's only if the audience notices,
you're in trouble.
Don't give up.
I didn't see you there.
- That was amazing.
- Thank you.
- May I touch?
- Well, of course.
I didn't know.
Remember that dance hall
I told you about?
You Rascal, You.
I played in the band.
Did women do that then?
What do you know about the war?
The 1939-'45?
We beat Germany one-nil?
It was an upside down world.
Women drove ambulances
and worked in shipyards and...
...I played in a band.
We called ourselves
The Blonde Bombshells.
Were you a star?
We played on the wireless once.
You were a star.
Yes, damn it, I was a star.
Grandma, why did you stop?
I stopped when the war stopped.
Then I was a wife and a mother
and a grandmother.
It's just something I did before I grew up.
But you carried on playing.
Well, I used to practice
when your grandpa was out playing golf.
But you're the first person to hear me for...
...dear God...
...nearly half a century.
That's terrible.
Joanna...
...I need your advice.
I'll try.
What's the best way

of showing respect for the dead?
That's easy. You go on living.
You're truly amazing.
- You're too good to be busking.
- I'm too old to have any other ambitions.
Why don't you take half?
Look, we play twice a week
and you buy the drinks, okay?
Okay.
I think this might be for you.
Why?
Because it says,
"Fancy a bit of fun, dearie?"
Why should it be for me?
If you say because I'm a woman,
I'll smash you on the head with the guitar.
My glass is empty.
- Same again?
- Please, let me have a look at that.
Do you?
Sorry?
Fancy a bit of fun?
Do you mind?
It is Elizabeth, isn't it?
Well, don't you remember?
Metropole Ballroom?
Moonlight Serenade?
Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy
From Company B?
Patrick.
You see? You do remember.
The man we were all warned about.
At least offer me the hand of friendship.
I might never see it again.
If you're going to play, play it properly.
I was just trying to catch
the spirit of the moment.
Are you gonna introduce me?
Paul...
...down-and-out street musician...
...Patrick, venerable friend and war hero.
That's cool.
What did you do in the war, Patrick?
I was a Blonde Bombshell.

"When you're dead in your grave
"No more women will you crave
"I'll be glad when you're gone
"Glad when you're gone
"Glad when you're gone
You rascal, you"
Here, let me take that.
Would you believe I recognized
the way you play?
That sound?
Sensual, erotic.
Don't be silly.
What are you doing around here?
The betting shop.
I'll give you a lift.
In that?
We'll drop off at my place.
Come on.
Don't worry about all that.
It's my concessionary parking system.
- You in?
- Yeah.
So, how come a nice girl like you
is reduced to working the streets?
It's because I said
"fuck" at George's funeral.
I assume George is your late,
lamented husband?
Yes.
He treat you well?
Well, he was kind and decent
and generous and law-abiding.
Boring?
- Mind your own business.
- Thought so.
This is where you live?
Yes, it's...
They call it "Grace and Favor Residence".
My father had the grace to die and...
...did me the favor of leaving it to me.
Thank you.
I would be deeply honored
if you would step across the threshold...
...and let my woodworm see you.

- Hi, Patrick.
- Hello, darling.
Didn't know you had a secret.
How's the masterpiece?
Bloody arm came off.
Who exactly is "darling"?
Carol. Lodger. Art student.

Tomorrow, 4:

- Shirt.
- Noted.
Ma'am.
A true artist.
Ex-jockey. Tipster in residence.
Known as "the wee man" and banned
from every race course in the country.
But...
...the real glory is found downstairs
in my personal crypt.
There's something
very special I want to show you.
What a surprise.
Don't be silly.
I never go all the way on the first date.
- The same kit?
- Yes.
Of course, I remember the roses.
- Do you still play?
- Only when nobody listens.
You were really pretty.
So were you.
Why did you do this?
Working with The Blonde Bombshells
was the happiest time of my life.
Life's been that bad?
I've been to prison once.
Married twice. Bankrupt three times.
- Ain't you got fun?
- Yeah, lots of fun.
But those were the days.
Best days.
I'll bet you a dollar
to a donut you think so, too.
If I admit that, it's like admitting

I've wasted most of my life.
Well, go ahead, admit it.
I've wasted mine
and enjoyed every minute of it.
Well, I can't tell a lie.
I was showing off to my granddaughter
about being on the wireless.
That was your fault
for being beautiful and talented.
Yes, I remember.
Excuse me.
- You do play awfully well.
- Thank you.
Is this bastard bothering you?
I'm from BBC.
Beg your pardon. I took you for a civilian.
Back to your place, sweetheart.
I wonder whether you and your orchestra
would be interested in broadcasting.
I have to say that girl plays beautifully.
- She's better than many a chap.
- And a lot prettier.
And it would be a joy and a delight
to do business with you.
Give me 30 seconds to wind them up
and set them going.
The next dance will be a quickstep.
Take it away, girls.
A one, a two, a one, two, three, four.
Come to the dressing room.
We'll compare our arrangements.
"Take it away, girls."
Nobody ever says that now.
Long time since we were girls.
I suppose technically speaking,
I never was.
You know, I've been thinking about it
more and more since the funeral.
We were heroic for a while.
Nobody told us.
When shall we two meet again,
Sunday lunch?
I'm taking my granddaughter
to the zoo on Sunday.

Are you still sexually active?

- What?

- I love zoos.

- You were the only man in the band?

- Yep.

One guy and all those chicks.

Do you mind?

I'm not and never have been a chick.

How did you get the job?

Well, they couldn't find a girl
to play the drums.

So a quiet word

with Betty the band leader...

...two pairs of nylon stockings,
and the job was mine.

Also, he was on the run.

Also, I was on the run.

Friends of yours.

I'll be in the pub.

Doesn't it strike you that what
you're doing is just a little bit humiliating?

Well, you try it.

Last week we had a request from a tourist
for the Japanese national anthem.

That's humiliating.

We played One Fine Day
from Madam Butterfly...

...and a joke about Pearl Harbor.

It implies that you're broke and
we're not taking care of you.

I'm not doing it for the money.

Paul keeps the money.

It's art.

For art's sake.

You do play very nicely.

Why don't you play as a hobby?

Whereabouts?

The old folks home after bingo?

What do we tell people?

Tell them the truth.

Tell 'em I've gone gaga
or to screw themselves.

- Mother, for god sake!

- For god sake what?

Shut up!

Believe me, we do understand.

We know how you feel.

You can't understand

because I don't understand, myself.

I remember about feelings.

I remember playing in the band

in the Metropole Ballroom.

Mares Eat Oats and Does Eat Oats

and knowing that at any minute...

...a large bomb could fall on my head

and blow us all to hell and back.

House rules said:

"You had to finish the tune

before you went to the air raid shelter."

That, my children,

is how you learn about real feelings.

I was more alive at that time

than before or since.

That's an alarming thing

to discover at my age.

I don't understand it. I don't expect you to.

Here's my lift.

Mum!

Who's he?

My fancy man.

There appears to be a man in her life.

Sorry to interrupt.

That man with the flowers, who is he?

Some old transvestite, I think.

- Do you know where you're going?

- Of course I do.

I don't remember this tunnel.

Oh, well.

So, the Metropole Ballroom...

...scene of our youthful happiness,

is now a carpet warehouse.

"A kid'll eat ivy, too

"If the words sound queer

And funny to your ear

"A little bit jumbled and jivey

"Sing mares eat oats

"And does eat oats

"And little lambs eat ivy

"Mares eat oats and does eat oats
And little lambs eat ivy
"A kid'll eat ivy, too
Wouldn't you?
"A kid'll eat ivy, too
Wouldn't you?"
I lied to my children.
Good. How else can they learn?
I told them we kept playing
even when the bombs were falling.
No, we didn't.
We ran like buggery to the air raid shelter.
"Mares eat oats and does eat oats
And little lambs eat ivy
"A kid'll eat ivy, too
Wouldn't you?
"A kid'll eat ivy, too
Wouldn't you?"
Do you know what would be lovely?
What?
To see them all again.
Don't be silly.
Maybe even to play together.
You should be put in a darkened room.
Come on.
It's brilliant and it's all the rage.
- What are you talking about?
- Reunion bands.
I mean, you've got The Stones,
The Who, Status Quo.
All those wrinklies from the 60's.
Always having reunion concerts...
...and going on world tours.
So, why not The Blonde Bombshells?
Where shall we play? The Albert Hall,
Shea Stadium, Hollywood Bowl?
Play at our next school dance.
I'm on the committee.
Let's assume
for the sake of argument that we...
...track down the survivors of the band
and prop 'em up in a line...
...and play some fragments
of ancient music.

Who would listen?

I would.

This is the BBC General Forces Program.

The BBC is proud to present
the most glamorous band...

...in all the land:

The Blonde Bombshells.

One, two, three, four.

Take it away!

How many cars do you own?

As many as I can borrow.

- Do we have to do this?

- Yes, we do.

Then we're going to need lots of flowers.

We can use the money
you lost at the dogs.

Vera?

Vera.

Do you remember me? Elizabeth.

And Patrick, you remember him.

The Blonde Bombshells, in the war?

Adolph Hitler,

Winston Churchill, Tommy Handley.

You played the alto sax, remember?

We sang like The Andrews Sisters.

- Don't Fence Me In.

- Mares Eat Oats And Does Eat Oats.

Pardon me, boy

Is that the Chattanooga choo-choo?

Vera.

Alas, poor Vera.

Alas, poor Joan.

Oh, the roses.

They're lovely.

At least you remembered us, Evelyn.

I remember you.

You were always pretty.

I remember him, he was always flash.

What are you in for?

- Legal tender.

- Is that an offense?

Getting things if you haven't got
any legal tender, that's an offense.

You get to play any music?

There's a bird, comes in once a week.
Teaches what she calls musical therapy.
But I never let on.
You need your secrets in a place like this.
Thanks for the flowers. They're lovely.
Look...
...a petal's fallen off already.
Alas, poor Evelyn.
This is all a ghastly mistake.
Guided tours of the cemeteries of England.
Goodwill missions to the living dead.
O ye of little faith. Come on, look.
Annie.
Two old sinners want to say hello.
Elizabeth!
And you.
You're looking good, Sister.
That's because I am good.
How long has this
goodness been going on?
Since I dumped you, Brother.
You'll find that God is much better value
in the long term.
- Are you looking for salvation?
- No.
- We're trying to get the band together.
- Band?
I'm sorry, I don't play
that kind of music anymore.
It's for my granddaughter.
It's not negotiable, I'm sorry.
I told you, it's a ghastly...
You got any small change?
- Sorry.
- Sorry.
I've had him checked out.
My God, you sound like the FBI.
The man used to run a casino.
He's an undischarged bankrupt
and he's been to prison.
I can do better than that.
She's rounding up her Blonde Bombshells...
...and threatening to play
at Joanna's school dance.

Where would you like to
run away to today?

- It's your turn to choose.
- Hastings, please.
- There's racing at Goodwood.
- I know, but I've chosen Hastings.

Betty the band leader lives at Hastings.
She's expecting you with a friend.

- I'm her ex-husband, for God's sake.
- I know that.

I'm sure she'll be civilized about it.

- This is Betty we're talking about.
- We're going to need a band leader.

That's reasonable, isn't it?

I'm not very good at reasonable.

Well, try harder.

- Nice one, Betty.
- Go, Betty.

Thank you, music lovers.

Now, in response to many requests,
there will be a short period of silence.

Betty.

The one and only.

There'll never be another.

Oh, darling.

You haven't changed a bit.

More than I can say for you.

- Thanks.
- Come, let's have a drink.

And something for my friends.

Vodka and tonic, please.

Glenlivet. Little water, please.

The old gentleman will pay.

You were the star, you know?

You were the youngest, the sweetest...

...and the most talented
of The Blonde Bombshells.

You were also the only virgin.

- You had me to thank for that.
- Really? Should I be grateful?
- You frightened or just cold?
- Both.

Stay close to me, darling.

Mr. Churchill recommends it.

Here.

Actually, I've got the keys
to the boiler house.

It's nice and warm in there.

- Betty, I didn't see you there.

- Elizabeth, sit.

You, here.

The girl is 15 years old.

You try anything with her,
you go to prison.

Also, I will take my garden shears
and personally castrate you.

All right, I can take a hint.

When's her birthday?

I don't know why I ran a band.

Most of the girls were
a bleeding nightmare.

They were always very nice to me.

That's because you were
young and innocent.

All right.

I'll show you something
young and innocent.

If you tell anyone about this, I'll kill you.

You old softy.

I can still get into this, you know,
size 14, short legs.

Who was this little girl?

What became of her?

What's it like, long marriage?

I've only had two little ones.

It's warm and cozy,
like an old pair of shoes.

Or a wet dog.

It's only after the kids leave home,
that you realize...

Well, there are no surprises anymore.

Mind you, a lot of people
don't want surprises.

Do you?

I'm not sure.

I might be developing a taste for them.

Betty's in Hastings.

Anna's in the arms of Jesus.

Joan's dead.
Vera's deranged.
Evelyn's in prison.
Madeleine's missing in action.
Dinah's somewhere in the States
and I've left many messages for Gwen.
So, is there a band or is there not a band?
I need to know what to tell the committee.
Tell them there is no band.
Tell them to hire a magician.
We'll pay off Evelyn's debts
and get her out of the nick.
That'd make four.
What about Annie?
I know these Christians.
If they say no, they mean it.
What about pieces of silver?
That is a totally evil suggestion.
So, please think about it.
Hello? Yes, speaking.
- Gwen?
- Gwen!
It's wonderful to speak to someone
who's sane and alive and not in custody.
Do you know the way to Wolverhampton?
If you can whistle it, I can play it.
Nobody goes
to Wolverhampton out of season.
You need passports, malaria jabs,
sturdy boots, an armed escort.
Don't be silly.
It'll be wonderful to see Gwen.
It'll be horrible.
"On the board again
"Riding for a fall again
"And I'm gonna get my all again
"Taking a chance on love
"I'm feeling fine again
"I'm going to rise and shine again
"I've almost lost my mind again
"Taking a chance on love
"Boy, I'm booked again"
- She's still terrific.
- I know, she was my second wife.

- Sorry?
- Nothing.
"Taking a chance on love
"This game I'm having a crack
"Needs good love from me
"So I'm taking a whack
"At any black cat I see
"On the breeze again
"And though I'd love to please again
"I'm saving your reprieves again
"So ring down the curtain
"It's love for certain
"I'm taking a chance on love
"Taking another chance on love"
Thank you very much.
You don't play anymore?
No, I retired when all the trumpet players...
...came home from the war
wanting their jobs back.
The men. You know what I mean.
Besides, it was hard on the lips, babe.
- I stick to the singing.
- No more triple tonguing?
That ceased to be your business long ago.
- Is it your business now, Elizabeth?
- Absolutely not.
Our purpose is to
get the band together again.
You got a gig?
First of next month.
What is it?
It's my granddaughter's school dance.
A school dance?
I never played school dances
even when I was at school.
- We're starting rehearsals next week.
- Sweetheart.
I have sung for my supper
for half a lifetime...
...and I've done it all without rehearsals.
I turn up at the gig,
I moan about the piano...
...I hand out the parts,
I count the guys in, and I get on with it.

Make it a social call.

- Come and see the girls.

- There'll be a fight.

Well, come and see the fight.

Do yourself a favor, babe.

Get rid of this man.

Why, what's wrong with him?

Please welcome Gwen back to the stage.

Ask him about the roses.

A one, a two, a one, two, three.

All right, stop!

- Terrible. Somebody was out of tune.

- We were all out of tune.

I was in tune.

Yes, but you still can't count to four.

How'd it sound for you?

I can see why the Germans bombed you.

We've got no top line, no bottom line...

...and there's bugga-all in the middle.

- I know we can't have a double bass...

- Why not?

There's one in the picture.

That's Madeleine. She's French.

She left the band and went back to Paris
to join the Resistance.

- That's the last we've heard of her.

- That's sad.

We'll have to manage
without her, I suppose.

That's not good enough.

You were war heroes.

I think you should try harder.

Where are you going?

No.

Thank you, dear.

What are you collecting for?

The poor, the sick, and the dispossessed.

You don't qualify.

Could the poor, the sick
and the dispossessed...

...use 259?

If you take this slip into that betting shop...

...they will give you 259.

- I don't gamble.

- You haven't.
I was the one that gambled
on a double at Newmarket.
The wages of sin.
You have my word.
The races on this occasion were not fixed.
You know I can't take this.
Remember the parable of the talents?
Matthew, chapter 25?
"He that had received the five talents...
"...traded with them and
made with them five more."
And the Lord said, "Well done,
thou good and faithful servant."
Now, that's got to be an even money shot
whichever way you look at it.
If I take this, what do I have to do?
Whatever the good Lord
in his infinite wisdom tells you.
I hope that he would suggest
you multiply your talent...
...and spread its sweetness
across all the earth.
Stop! Stop, stop, stop, stop.
Oh, dear.
It's amazing.
The more we rehearse,
the worse we sound.
Well?
The committee meets tonight.
What do I tell them?
Tell them we need a good lead trumpet...
...so at least the punters will guess
what we're trying to play.
I found this old Christmas card from Dinah.
Was there anyone finer?
She married a G.I.
And moved to the States.
"I dumped him and found me
one or two more."
She's been living in Scotland.
Scotland?
I've been phoning her number in New York,
getting some rude answers.

"The last one was rich, and when he died,
he left me this place.

"His hobby was collecting small countries."

The jammy cow!

Do you mind? Language.

So, what do I tell the committee?

Tell them we'll play.

- Are you sure?

- No, but tell them we'll play.

Yes, but have you heard the latest?

She's going to Scotland with him.

I think we should meet the man.

Well, you know me.

I've always had a thing about older men.

That's not a nice word

to use to your sister.

"Don't sit under the apple tree

"With anyone else but me

"Anyone else but me

"Anyone else but me

No, no, no

"Don't sit under the apple tree

"With anyone else but me

"Till I come marching home"

Hey, would you come

and play for the G.I.'s?

I mean, we'd guarantee

a convoy down, of course.

I say it would be an honor to be

of service to Mr. Roosevelt.

Excuse me.

Are you a chap?

Yes, that's why I pee standing up.

Shouldn't you be in the Armed Forces?

Absolutely not.

I've taken advice.

Dressed like this,

I'd be far too easy a target.

You just bought yourself

a one-way ticket to Shitsville, pal.

Where are you taking him?

- Elizabeth!

- Patrick?

Please, you can't! Patrick!

- That lad ought to be ashamed of himself.
- Look! What's he supposed to...
Elizabeth, you play beautifully, sensually!
Can anybody play the drums?
I've picked up the odd hint...
...that you're unhappy about
my friendship with Patrick.
So, here he is.
And he's very happy to explain himself.
I think it isn't the friendship as such.
It's just too soon.
Too soon after your father's death.
At a time when I'm still
emotionally vulnerable.
Well, yes.
That being so,
Elizabeth should not be consorting...
...with an aging Lothario.
Even though he sends me flowers
two or three times a week.
My concern is about you making
terrible fools of yourselves...
...and of us at the school dance.
Patrick will answer all the charges.
- May I offer the case for the defense?
- Please. We're here to listen.
Thank you.
Well, I'll start with the easy bit.
It's true that in the beginning,
I wore a pretty frock.
And I played Run Rabbit Run
when I was one of those rabbits...
...and I was running.
And later on, after I donned the khaki,
I did win some medals.
You won medals?
Can we see them?
I always carry this one
as a good luck charm.
I was carrying it the day I met your
grandmother again after all these years.
- Is it a good one?
- Yes, it is.
It's a Military Cross.

Seriously brilliant.
But it's all irrelevant.
What you have to understand
is that for six years...
...we all lived with the possibility
that every second...
...we could be killed.
And that focuses the mind.
It's frightening, yes, but it's also liberating.
The ultimate gamble,
the biggest crap game ever invented.
And your mother and I...
We feel guilty.
Do we?
How many died? 20, 30 million?
And yet for some of us who survived...
...it was totally wonderful.
- Totally wonderful, true or false?
- True.
And we can't say it out loud
except to other Blonde Bombshells.
Playing at the dance,
well, that's our little attempt to have...
...one last gamble before we shuffle off...
...to the great Metropole
Ballroom in the sky.
That was very impressive.
When did you win the Military Cross?
I forget exactly, 1963-4.
Which war?
Actually, I won it at poker
from an old war hero...
...down on his luck.
- That's despicable.
- I was desperate.
I want your family to like me.
What the hell is that?
This belongs to Sid.
Who's Sid, another weird lodger?
He used to be my partner in the casino
until he decided to go straight.
Now, he sells used cars.
I told him, "Sid...
"...I need to borrow a really special motor..."

"...to take a really special someone
to Scotland."

You can thank Sid,
but I'm not coming with you.

What?

I got my credit card statement
this morning.

- So?

- Those flowers you've sent me...
...you've been charging
to my bloody credit card.

Obviously.

I'm not allowed one.

I only spent the money on you.

- How did you get the number?

- I used my initiative.

You looked in my handbag.

- You make it sound horrible.

- It is horrible. You're pathetic.

All right, I apologize.

I'm devastated,

I should've asked permission.

Shut your face, go to Scotland,
and come back with a trumpet player.

It won't be the same without you.

Go to the dogs. Go to Wolverhampton.

Go to hell! I don't care!

Such a pity, you know.

Sleeping beauties generally
weigh in at 100 years.

And the usual arrangement
is for the frog to turn into the prince...
...not the other way around.

Bloody door.

"For you take the high road

And I'll take the low road

"And I'll be in Scotland afore ye

"But me and my true love

Will never meet again

"On the bonny banks of Loch Lomond

"By yon bonny banks

"And by yon bonny braes

"Where the sun shines bright

"On Loch Lomond

"Where me and my true love
Will never meet again
"On the bonny, bonny banks
of Loch Lomond
"Oh, you take the high road
And I'll take the low road
"And I'll be in Scotland before ye
"But me and my true love
Will never meet again
"On the bonny, bonny banks
of Loch Lomond
"O you take the high road
"And I'll take the low road
"And I'll be in Scotland afore ye
"But me and my true love
Will never meet again
"On the bonny, bonny banks
of Loch Lomond"

Pardon?

You'll be the gentleman.
And this will be your suitcase.
And you will be chilly, I dare say.
Yes, it's just possible.
Sure.

- This will help.

- Thank you so much. Thank you.

Oh, great dogs.

Patti, Maxine...

...and Laverne.

After The Andrews Sisters.

Um, one of them is a boy.

The lady of the house is most insistent...

...in the matter of names.

Good god. When did you get here?

The overnight sleeper.

Central heating and a roof.

Does this mean I'm forgiven?

Absolutely not. I didn't think you'd come.

But we needed a trumpet player.

And I didn't trust you to deliver one.

I wouldn't trust you to deliver
a bottle of semi-skimmed milk.

Thanks so much.

Have you seen Dinah?

Apparently, the lady of the house
doesn't appear in the hours of daylight.
She's probably bricked up
in the west wing.

As soon as the gentleman
has finished his wee dram...

...I'll show him to his accommodation.

We have prepared two bedrooms.

The lady of the house is of the opinion
you'd require only one.

- How many rooms would you be requiring?

- Two, please.

Would they be adjoining
for personal preference?

They should be separated
by a wide stretch of water...

...for personal preference.

Thank you, McNab.

Ma'am.

Thank you, Dinah.

That was a wonderful meal.

- It's a nice little place you've got here.

- I married well and frequently.

But I know all the dirt on me.

I want to know the dirt on you.

Does this mean you've
completed the set, Patrick?

There's no dirt on us.

We're pure as the driven snow.

I hate snow.

It's so goddamned white.

What you mean, completed the set?

He hasn't told you about
the roses on the drum kit?

No, I've tended to go off flowers recently,
as it happens.

Are you going to tell her or shall I?

Well, actually, I got the idea
from the spitfire pilots during the war.

"Pardon me, boy

Is that the Chattanooga choo-choo?

"Track 29

"Boy you can give me a shine

"I can afford

To board the Chattanooga choo-choo
"I got my fare
"And just the travel to spare
"You leave the Pennsylvania station
About a quarter to four
"Read a magazine
And then you're in Baltimore
"Dinner in a diner
Nothing could be finer
"Than to have your ham and eggs
In Carolina
"When you hear the whistle
Blowing into the bar
"Then you know that Tennessee
Is not very far
"Shove a lot of coal in
Got to keep it rollin'
"Chattanooga, there you are"
Yeah, he screwed the lot of us.
I looked upon it
as my contribution to the war effort.
And what about the fight?
Never mind about the adolescent
sex and the fights. What about the music?
What you tell me is that
the Blonde Bombshell reunion band...
...thus far comprises you two...
...a foul-mouthed piano player...
...an alto player out
of the slammer on bail...
...a trombone player in the arms of Jesus...
...a de facto lunatic, two corpses...
...and a singer who won't
show up on the night.
And not forgetting your lovely self.
Do you still play?
Do I still play?
A little story.
My grandson plays trumpet
in his high school band...
...in Boston, Massachusetts.
On a recent visit
to Grandma's magic castle...
...in downtown Brigadoon.

He consulted me.

I gave him a lesson, and guess what?

I can still blow this thing.

I can still part the waters...

...and bring down the walls of the city.

That's seriously brilliant.

Sadly, the lady is an officially
recognized alcoholic.

- Does this often happen?

- Every night.

But she knows she is an alcoholic.

And apparently that's the first step
towards a cure.

- How long has it been going on?

- Since the Second World War.

An unhappy love affair, seemingly.

- Men can be swine.

- So I'm led to believe.

Elizabeth.

What?

I need to ask you something.

Patrick.

Mind if I sit down?

It's been a long day.

And I'm not cold and I'm not frightened.

And there are no bombs falling.

Scotland's not at war.

And I have no intention
of completing your set.

What's it like being a woman?

What?

Well, sit down.

Well, you see, the last weeks

I've relived quite a lot of my past life.

Most of it seems to have
been a bit of a shambles.

Well, that was well spotted.

And I think quite a lot of that
shambles could have been avoided...

...if I'd tried a bit harder
to understand women.

Which is odd since I pretended
to be one for so long.

But...

Well, that doesn't really help.
I mean, women...
Well, you're different, aren't you?
Yes, we have babies and husbands
and washing machines.
I see your family...
...and I see three generations
of women and it's lovely.
Wish I had generations.
Much too late for that.
It's too late for everything.
No, not everything.
But I'm going to bed now.
Why did you marry George?
Patrick, you know what it was like.
When I was a young woman,
your soul purpose in life...
...was to get engaged
to a young man with prospects.
So, I did. I met him at a staff dance.
A dance. What was the band like?
Oh, lousy.
Jimmy Dickenson, and his Rhythm Rascals.
I was a rhythm rascal once.
Now I'm serious and responsible.
And I think I'm in love with you.
No, you're not.
You're just cold and frightened.
- Goodnight, Patrick.
- Goodnight.
Nice doggies.
Stay home and look after the lady.
She's a fine musician,
but she's not very well.
Hey! Where the hell are you guys going?
London, we've got a gig.
And I'm held prisoner here against my will.
Wait, I'm coming down!
God, she's coming with us.
- What should we do, head for the hills?
- These are the hills.

SCHOOL DANCE:

Stage management, up the ladder.

Hi, guys.

Sound check in 10 minutes, okay?

There you go.

Well, this is it, D-Day.

- Are you nervous?

- No, terrified.

Any news on Dinah?

Yes, she's happily ensconced
in the Savoy Hotel.

We saw her at breakfast.

She planned to order a small distillery...
...from room service for later on.

- Oh, god.

I'm in charge of catering
and Leslie's doing decorations.

Hi, Leslie. You're working well.

The decor's gonna be a wow.

Oh, I don't really like wows.

Hey, what manner of place is this?

This is where we're gonna
make sweet music.

Forget it, she's here.

- Evelyn!

- Dinah!

- You're looking good for a jailbird.

- I've been rehabilitated.

Annie!

Dinah, good to see you.

Betty.

Glad you could make it, Dinah.

- The famous roses.

- Oh, him and his bloody roses.

Just for the record, mine is quite definitely
there under false pretenses.

I'd been drinking.

I don't remember very much about it.

Far as I can recall,

it was deeply embarrassing...

...and desperately quick.

It was horrible. I try not to think about it.

I haven't seen you guys since the big fight.

Look. Will somebody tell me
about the big fight?

It was the day we were

gonna play for the Yanks.
You couldn't come.
They wouldn't allow you off school.
Hey, sweet cakes!
I love Americans.
Hey, blondie, over here!
Marry me, I love you!
Girls, calm down.
- Hi, girls.
- Hello.
Welcome to New Jersey on Thames.
- It's a pleasure to be here.
- A pleasure to be here.
Well, that remains to be seen.
We've got a slight technical difficulty.
- This is it.
- Watch your heels, girls.
Welcome to our social club.
- Careful, Dinah.
- What happened?
- So much for our big night.
- A doodle bug. A flying bomb.
- I hope we still get paid.
- The guys were real disappointed.
They heard you on the radio.
And they found out you all were dames,
you can imagine.
I'm the one who's disappointed.
That's the lady from the bathroom.
- Hey, girls.
- Darling boy.
Put that man down. He's mine!
No, he isn't.
Patrick and I are secretly engaged.
And I want everyone to know it.
Well, I got some news.
He's actually engaged to me.
He's even met my mother.
Sorry, girls, he's marrying me
as soon as the war's over.
I just bought a silk nightie
on the black market.
He's marrying me.
I spoke to the vicar

and he gave me some booklets.

He proposed to me.

In the boiler house on Tuesday.

He proposed to me on Thursday.

You're all wasting your time.

Patrick's already married to me.

- Come on.

- Please.

We got married this morning.

- You lying bitch.

- Tell them, dear.

- Yes, tell us.

- You lied to us.

Tell us. Go on, what's all this rubbish?

It's true. I got a 48-hour pass

so I could get married and play the gig.

Anyway, tomorrow I go off to foreign parts.

- Lf you live that long.

- He won't.

Well, how was it?

- You tell them.

- Dinah, you were sharp.

Evie, you were flat.

And Annie, you were in tune,

but you've forgotten how to swing.

And Patrick, you sound like

you're wearing a surgical boot.

- What about me?

- Oh, you were fine, darling.

- She would say that. You're her favorite.

- Oh, please.

- Girls, girls.

- Oh, shut up!

Go screw yourself.

That's as individuals.

As a unit, we were crap.

Maybe we were crap way back in 1944...

...except in our dreams.

Hey, and that's another thing.

There's to be no drinking on the stand.

Sorry, babe. This is not negotiable.

Sober, I can't play a note.

Drunk, I can't play a note.

But there's a point in the middle

where I play like a goddamn angel.
Please, Dinah, do you mind?
I'd rather you didn't blaspheme.
This is a bandstand, sister.
If you don't like it,
get thee to a fucking nunnery.
That's enough!
I resign!
I resign!
You can't do that.
Shit, I resign too.
- Girls.
- Me too.
I'm going back to the prison.
At least people are nice in prison.
Come back.
Your husband just dropped
the bomb on the band, lady.
Stop, you're not going anywhere!
You lot, you're a disgrace to women.
I wouldn't disagree with that.
- Don't you realize what's at stake here?
- What's at stake? I can't think of anything.
First off, the dance is in an hour's time.
There's 100 quid in it for you.
I had to fight the committee to get it.
- Is that 100 pounds each?
- No, between you to share.
And tea and biscuits.
If I give you 100 pounds,
may I proceed peacefully...
...to the nearest liquor store?
No, you may not!
And what about all my calls
to the French embassy in French?
What's she talking about?
Tracking down your Madeleine.
Madeleine?
Madeleine, do you still play?
A 5'3" woman doesn't lug
that instrument across Europe...
...on public transport just for the fun of it.
Have you started without me?
Only because we thought you were dead.

I'm very much alive.
Not so sure about the rest of you, though.
Elizabeth!
And Patrick.
Patrick.
The man who was going to marry me.
Now we can rehearse.
Apparently they're called Open Wound.
- Open what?
- Wound.
And the music they play is retro punk.
Well, I can't tell whether
this is any good or not.
I think we might be in the wrong place.
I think we might be
in the wrong bleeding century.
I will be good for the rest of my life
if you help me get through this, please.
- Any news of Gwen?
- Not as yet.
She doesn't show, we'll kill her.
You'll see to it. Right, babe?
There's a geezer comes in the bar.
He's in that line of work.
I know how to kill people.
Do you really know how to kill people?
It was necessary in the Resistance.
That's why I play music.
Music is the only clean thing I know.
There.
Now, how's that?
Second favorite lips.
- I've come to say I'm sorry.
- Sorry, what for?
It's all my fault.
If I hadn't been beautiful and talented,
we wouldn't have been on the BBC.
The man from the BBC wouldn't have seen
you and wouldn't have been arrested.
And you wouldn't be going off
to almost certain death.
That was you?
Of course it was.
I've been wondering for years

who that little schoolgirl was.
Maybe not years,
but a good 20 minutes, certainly.
Shut up. Say something sensible for once.
Will you marry me?
Absolutely not.
You don't even remember
you gave me my first grown-up kiss.
- I'm not very good at remembering.
- I'm still waiting for the second.
Open Wound will be back
later this evening.
And now, it's my pride and
privilege to introduce, well...
...my grandmother, actually.
And the Blonde Bombshells.
Thank you, Joanna.
A long time ago when the world
was young, I was a Blonde Bombshell.
I wasn't much older than
a lot of you here this evening.
Now, several decades later,
I made a discovery...
...that old people are just young people
who've been around for a long time.
Here's one.
From London, England...
...direct from the All Night Casino,
the little boy who never grew up...
...and the finest transvestite
percussionist of our time...
...Patrick on the drums.
From the end of the pier
at Hastings, England...
...a woman who has lived suspended
over the deep end of the ocean...
...for a long time and hasn't fallen in yet.
Betty on piano.
From the blood-soaked
continent of Europe...
...a woman who tells it like it was,
is, and ever more shall be...
...Madeleine on bass.
From the highlands of Scotland,

trailing glory, malt whiskey and alimony...

...Dinah plays the sweetest trumpet
this side of Jericho.

On abscondment from Christianity,
with a note countersigned by God...

...we say amen with Annie on trombone.
On parole from the debtors' prison and
getting help and care in the community...
...Evelyn on alto sax.

All right.

- I thought I'd come along for the fight.
- It's about time, Gwen.
- You missed it.
- Shit!
- You're going to sing?
- Introduce me.

From the Latin quarter of Wolverhampton,
the woman with a voice of gold...

...who never ever plays school dances
and totally unrehearsed...
...Gwen.

From the leafy suburbs of south London...

...the bombshell who made
all this possible...

...Elizabeth on tenor sax.

Put it all together and what have you got?

Ladies and gentlemen,
the Blonde Bombshells of the third age.

"It don't mean a thing

If you ain't got that swing

"It don't mean a thing

All you got to do is sing

"Makes no difference if it's sweet or

"Don't mean a thing

If you ain't got that swing

"Don't mean a thing

If you ain't got that swing

"Don't mean a thing, baby

"Don't mean a thing, my baby

"Don't mean a thing, baby

"Not if you ain't got that swing

"Swing

"Swing"

Sweetheart, I've just seen

little old Chip's drum kit.

Yes?

Does that mean what we think it means?

- He's completed the set?

- We found the keys to the boiler house.

And about time, too.

- You're not going to marry him, are you?

- Why shouldn't she?

Everyone should marry

Patrick at least once.

But I'm not. He was right the first time.

All I wanted was a bit of fun, dearie.

"They call me coquette and mademoiselle

"I must admit I like it quite well

"It's something to be the darling of all

"The grand femme fatale

"The belle of the ball

"There's nothing as gay as life in Paris

"There's no other person

"I'd rather be

"I love what I do

"I love what I see

"But where is the schoolgirl

That used to be me

"The apple trees

"Blossoms in the breeze

"That we walked amongst

"Lying in the hay

"Games we used to play

"While the rounds were sung

"Only yesterday

"When the world was young

"When the world was young"

Betty has started promoting

The Blonde Bombshells again...

...and booked us into every

seaside venue that will take us.

Annie allows herself to play

the devil's music...

...but has given up trying to save

the souls of musicians.

Evelyn has joined a government think tank

on the subject of prison reform.

Madeleine continues to be

slim and beautiful. We hate her for this.
Gwen has made several award-winning
albums of songs so old...
...that most people think they're new.
Dinah gives up drinking on a regular basis,
and has married her man servant.
She now calls herself "Mrs. Brown".
I changed my credit card,
but I realize I can't change Patrick.
He wants to make an honest woman
out of me, but that would spoil everything.
Being a Blonde Bombshell
is still the most fun I've ever had.
So far.
And if you need to hire a band
for your wedding, wake, or bar mitzvah...
...the Blonde Bombshells
are usually available.
Take it away, girls!