

B E A D Guides Chord Flow

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Life on Mars has one final secret to look at, it's use of diminished chords in the final bars of the chorus. The chords are essentially following the scale of G.

Those basic chords are:

G Am Bm C

One cool thing you can do with diminished chords, is use them as a kind of bridge between chords in a scale, they add a bit more tension and interest. David Bowie knew this. So did Paul McCartney. This type of movement features prominently in Blackbird which he wrote for the Beatles. In Life on Mars this means adding a diminished chord between G and Am:

Bowie simply adds a G^{#dim} between the G and Am chords.

G G^{#dim} Am

Then he adds an A^{#dim} between the Am and Bm chords

G G^{#dim} Am A^{#dim} Bm C