

Song of Songs

Pronouns Parsed, plus Plot

The original Hebrew text did not ascribe speakers to each verse in the Song of Songs, as many of our English Bibles do. Hence, there is some difference amongst the translations as to who is speaking, and to whom.

Below is the Song of Songs in the KJV text.
Included are occasional alternative readings in the NKJV and NIV.

*Notes in green are David Tavender's editorial notes.
It is conceded that many of these are open to debate.*

Letters and numbers in red brackets show each relevant pronoun parsed. Passages highlighted in yellow highlight a grammatical anomaly regarding gender; these are mainly in respect to the "Daughters of Jerusalem".

Parsing Guide

fp – feminine plural

fs – feminine singular

mp – masculine plural

ms – masculine singular

ptcpl – participle (often translated as something like, "the one that...")

The numbers 1, 2, and 3 indicate 1st person

1st person – I, me, mine, we, us, ours, etc.

1cs – 1st person common (i.e. masculine or feminine) singular

1cp – 1st person common (i.e. masculine or feminine) plural

2nd person – you, yours, etc.

(KJV: "thee", "thou", "thine" = singular // "ye", "you", "yours" = plural)

2ms – 2nd person masculine singular

2mp – 2nd person masculine plural

2fs – 2nd person feminine singular

2fp – 2nd person feminine plural

3rd person – he, she, it, they, them, theirs, etc.

3ms – 3rd person masculine singular

3mp – 3rd person masculine plural

3fs – 3rd person feminine singular

3fp – 3rd person feminine plural

3cs – 3rd person common (i.e. masculine or feminine) singular

3cp – 3rd person common (i.e. masculine or feminine) plural

Words highlighted in yellow present a grammatical anomaly regarding number or gender, especially in phrases relating to the "Daughters of Jerusalem".

The Plot

As presented here, the story centres around three main characters: **King Solomon, a young lady, and a shepherd** (several extra characters play lesser roles). Essentially, a young lady finds herself reluctantly part of King Solomon's harem in a palace at Jerusalem. However, she already has a lover in the countryside, a shepherd.

The story tells of two contrasting scenarios: On the one hand, we witness King Solomon's advances to the young lady whilst actively pursuing relationships with many other women. On the other hand, we see the much deeper and substantial commitment between the young lady and her shepherd lover. Despite the access to vast material riches and pleasures by pleasing the king, the young lady subtly repels the advances of Solomon and remains committed to the shepherd, the true love of her life.

Chapter 1

1. *[Introduction]* The song of songs, which is Solomon's *[Hebrew may also read, to Solomon, or about Solomon]*.

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ACT ONE 1:2 – 3:5

1:2-4 Setting the scene. Present are King Solomon, the ladies of his harem (the "Daughters of Jerusalem"), and a young lady who is one of the central characters of the song. To show us what was probably a typical scene, one of the harem addresses her companions whilst flattering Solomon, with the harem in turn interjecting and flattering Solomon ("we will...").

[Within King Solomon's palace harem chambers, Jerusalem.]

2. *[A lady of the harem, aside, to the harem]* Let him *[Solomon]* *[3ms]* kiss me with the kisses of his *[3ms]* mouth:

[addressing Solomon directly] for thy *[2ms]* love is better than wine.

3. Because of the savour of thy *[2ms]* good ointments thy *[2ms]* name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins *[Solomon's harem]* love thee *[2ms]*.

4. Draw me *[1cs]*,

[Harem, collectively] we *[1cp]* will run after thee *[Solomon]* *[2ms]*:

[Lady of the harem] the king hath brought me into his *[3ms]* chambers:

[Harem, collectively] we *[1cp]* will be glad and rejoice in thee *[Solomon]* *[2ms]*, we *[1cp]* will remember thy *[2ms]* love more than wine: the upright *[mp]* love thee *[2ms]* *[NKJV rightly do they love you / NIV how right they are to adore you]*.

1:5,6 After this, we hear from a young lady, probably the latest addition to the harem.

5. *[Young lady, addressing the harem. Perhaps this includes the harem's male minders, a possible explanation for the masculine gender associated with this term throughout the book. The young lady was previously a shepherdess, but is now a "Shulamite" or "Solomonite" (cp 6:13) as in one who has*

been placed in the harem and is one “belonging” to Solomon. The term “Shulamite” only occurs in one verse of this book’s text – 6:13.] I [1cs] am black [tanned or dark skinned], but comely, [O ye] daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

6. Look not [2mp] upon me [1cs], because I [1cs] am black, because the sun hath looked upon me [1cs]: my [1cs] mother's children [sons] [mp] [i.e. my brothers] were angry with me [1cs]; they [3cp] made me [1cs] the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own [1cs] vineyard have I [1cs] not kept. [This vineyard may be a literal agricultural reference, is perhaps figurative of her virginity Cp. 8:12.]

Within the palace harem chambers.

1:7,8 Despite her “duty” to also flatter King Solomon in this setting, the young lady imagines herself conversing with a young shepherd, a peasant who was the lady’s true love before she was taken from the countryside to Jerusalem to be part of Solomon’s harem.

7. [Young lady, to a young shepherd] Tell me [1cs], O thou [3fs] whom my soul loveth [3fs], where thou feedest [2ms], where thou makest thy flock to rest [2ms] at noon: for why should I [1cs] be as one that turneth aside [fs ptcpl] [NKJV veils herself] by the flocks of thy [2ms] companions [mp]?

8. [Young shepherd, a direct response, or an imagined response] If thou know [2fs] not, O thou [2fs] fairest [2fs] among women [fp], go thy way forth [NKJV/NIV follow] [2fs] by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy [2fs] kids beside the shepherds' [mp] tents.

1:9-17 Solomon now turns his attention to the young lady amidst the harem in the chambers. He flatters her, and she tolerates his flattery. However, her heart is really devoted to her true lover, the peasant shepherd.

9. [Solomon, to the young lady] I [1cs] have compared thee [2fs], O my [1cs] love, to a company of horses [NKJV my filly / NIV a mare] [1cs] in Pharaoh's chariots.

10. Thy [2fs] cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy [2fs] neck with chains of gold

11. [Harem] We [1cp] will make thee [2fs] borders of gold with studs of silver.

12. [Young lady, to herself, or to the harem] While the king sitteth at his [3ms] table, my [1cs] spikenard [aromatic essential oil] sendeth forth the smell thereof.

13. A bundle of myrrh is my [1cs] well-beloved [ms] [Addressing Solomon or the shepherd?] unto me [1cs]; he [NKJV that] shall lie all night betwixt my [1cs] breasts.

14. My [1cs] beloved [ms] is unto me [1cs] as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.

15. [Solomon, to the young lady] Behold, thou [2fs] art fair [fs], my [1cs] love [fs]; behold, thou [2fs] art fair [fs]; thou [2fs] hast doves' eyes.

16. Behold, thou [2ms] art fair [ms], my [1cs] beloved [ms], yea, pleasant [ms]: also our [1cs] bed is green.

17. The beams of our [1cp] house[s] are cedar, and our [1cp] rafters of fir.

Chapter 2

2:1-7 Solomon falls asleep at this point, and the young lady begins to address her companions in the harem. She charges them not to “stir nor awake love until it pleases”. Some translations read something like “stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please”; hence there is uncertainty as to whether this refers to not stirring a person (probably Solomon) or to love itself. Similar requests are found in 3:5 and 8:4.

1. [*Young lady, to the harem*] I [1cs] am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.
2. As the lily among thorns, so is my [1cs] love [*i.e. my gesture of love*] among the daughters [fp] [*i.e. the harem*].
3. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my [1cs] beloved [ms] [*the shepherd? or Solomon?*] among the sons [mp]. I [1cs] sat down under his [3ms] shadow with great delight, and his [3ms] fruit was sweet to my [1cs] taste.
4. He [3ms] [*now probably referring to Solomon*] brought me [1cs] to the banqueting house, and his [3ms] banner over me [1cs] was love.
5. Stay [NKJV sustain / NIV strengthen] [3cp] me [1cs] with flagons, comfort [3cp] me [1cs] with apples: for I [1cs] am sick of love.
6. His [3ms] left hand is under my [1cs] head, and his [3ms] right hand doth embrace me [1cs].
7. I [1cs] charge you, O ye [2mp] daughters [fp] of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye [2mp] stir not up, nor awake [2mp] [my] love, till he [NKJV/NIV it] please. [NKJV/NIV sense being, 'do not stir up love until it pleases'] [cp. 3:5 – exactly the same; similar to 8:4] [Possibly requesting that the harem not wake up Solomon, as he will want to seduce her.]

2:8-3:5 She then tells the harem about the shepherd, her true love. She describes him and tells a story about him: One day he snuck up to the palace, peered through the lattice and spoke to her. At night, she looked for him, but he had gone, so she snuck out and eventually located him. She may have taken him back to her family home in the country, as well, though this is not clear. The phrase, "stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please" (or its variant) is spoken again.

8. [*The young lady continues speaking to the harem, but now refers to the young shepherd*] The voice of my [1cs] beloved [ms]! behold, he cometh [ms ptcpl] leaping [ms ptcpl] upon the mountains, skipping [ms ptcpl] upon the hills.
9. My [1cs] beloved [ms] is like [ms ptcpl] a roe or a young hart: behold, he [ms] standeth [ms ptcpl] behind our wall, he looketh [ms ptcpl] forth at the windows, showing himself [NKJV gazing / NIV peering] [ms ptcpl] through the lattice.
10. My [1cs] beloved [ms] spake [3ms], and said [3ms] unto me [1cs],
[The shepherd is being quoted by the young lady as saying:]
 Rise up [fs], my [1cs] love [fs], my [1cs] fair one [fs], and come away [fs].
11. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
12. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
13. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise [fs], my [1cs] love [fs], my [1cs] fair one [fs], and come away [fs].
14. O my [1cs] dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me [1cs] see [fs] thy [fs] countenance, let me [1cs] hear [fs] thy [2fs] voice; for sweet is thy [2fs] voice, and thy [2fs] countenance is comely.
15. Take us [1cp] the foxes [mp], the little foxes [mp], that spoil [mp ptcpl] the vines: for our [1cp] vines have tender grapes. [*i.e. the shepherd is saying to the young lady, "Come with me, away from the palace harem, and let us enjoy each other."*]

16. [*Young lady, still to the harem*] My [1cs] beloved [ms] is mine [1cs], and I [1cs] am his [3ms]: he feedeth [ms ptcpl] among the lilies.
17. [*The young lady reports what she said to the shepherd*] Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn [ms], my [1cs] beloved [ms], and be thou like [ms ptcpl] a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

Chapter 3

1. [*The young lady continues her story, to the harem*] By night on my [1cs] bed I [1cs] sought [him] whom my [1cs] soul [3fs] loveth [NKJV the one I love / NIV the one my heart loves] [*i.e. the shepherd*]: I [1cs] sought him [3ms], but I [1cs] found him [3ms] not.

2. I [1cs] will rise now, and go [1cs] about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek [1cs] him [3ms] whom my [1cs] soul [3fs] loveth [NKJV *the one I love* / NIV *the one my heart loves*]: I [1cs] sought him [3ms], but I [1cs] found him [3ms] not.
3. The watchmen [mp] that go about the city found [3cp] me [1cs]: [to whom I said], Saw ye [2mp] [him] whom [my] soul [3fs] loveth?
4. It was but a little that I [1cs] passed from them [3mp], [cp 5:7, *where the watchmen respond differently the second time*] but I [1cs] found him [NKJV/NIV *the one*] whom my soul loveth [3fs]: I [1cs] held him [3ms], and would not let him [him = 3ms] go [would not let go = 1cs], until I [1cs] had brought him [3ms] into my [1cs] mother's [fs] house, and into the chamber of her [fs] that conceived me [1cs]. [*The young lady took the shepherd back with her to her family home*]
5. [*Young lady, to the harem*] I [1cs] charge you, O ye [2mp] daughters [fpc] of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye [2mp] stir not up, nor awake [2mp] [my] love, till he [NKJV/NIV *it – sense is, do not stir up love until it pleases*] please. [cp. 2:7 – *exactly the same; similar to 8:4*] Possibly requesting that the harem not wake up Solomon, as he will want to seduce her.

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ACT TWO 3:6 – 5:1

Scene: Just outside King Solomon's palace, perhaps a few days or weeks later.

3:6-11 King Solomon returns home to Jerusalem from business in Lebanon, a country to the north of Israel but under Solomon's control at the time. An unknown official heralds Solomon's return to Jerusalem and orders that the harem go and greet him.

6. [*An unknown palace official, referring to a new "bride" Solomon has brought back from Lebanon; the latest in a long line of loves. He addresses the harem as Solomon's force returns with him to the palace.*] Who is this [fs] that cometh [fs] out of the wilderness [cp.8:5, *where a similar phrase is used, but it is the shepherd who is speaking*] like pillars of smoke, perfumed [fs] with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?
7. Behold his [3ms] bed [NKJV *couch* / NIV *carriage*], which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men [mp] are about it, of the valiant [mpc] of Israel.
8. They [3mp] all hold swords, being expert [mpc] in war: every man [ms] hath his [3ms] sword upon his [3ms] thigh because of fear in the night.
9. King Solomon made himself [3ms] a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.
10. He [3ms] made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters [fpc] of Jerusalem.
11. Go forth [fpc], O [ye] daughters [fpc] of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his [3ms] mother [3fs] crowned him [3ms] in the day of his espousals [NKJV/NIV *wedding*], and in the day of the gladness of his [3ms] heart. [*"Go and greet Solomon as he arrives back home."*]

Chapter 4

4:1 -5:1 With Solomon is another newly acquired wife, whom he has married whilst in Lebanon. Solomon flatters his new wife with compliments (4:1-16a), she warms to his advances (4:16b), responds to her likewise (5:1a), and then invites his companions to celebrate the occasion (5:1b).

1. [*Probably Solomon, to his new bride from Lebanon*] Behold, thou art fair [fs], my [1cs] love; behold, thou [fs] art fair; thou [2fs] hast doves' eyes within thy [2fs] locks [NKJV/NIV *veil*]: thy [2fs] hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.
2. Thy [2fs] teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.
3. Thy [2fs] lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy [2fs] speech is comely: thy [2fs] temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks [NKJV/NIV *veil*].

4. Thy [2fs] neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.
5. Thy [2fs] two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.
6. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I [1cs] will get me [1cs] to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.
7. Thou [2fs] art all fair, my [1cs] love; there is no spot in thee [2fs].
8. Come [2fs] with me [1cs] from Lebanon, [my] spouse [fs], with me [1cs] from Lebanon: look [2fs] from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.
9. Thou [2fs] hast ravished my [1cs] heart, my [1cs] sister [fs], [my] spouse [fs]; thou [2fs] hast ravished my [1cs] heart with one of thine [2fs] eyes, with one chain of thy [2fs] neck [NKJV/NIV necklace].
10. How fair is thy [2fs] love, my [1cs] sister [fs], [my] spouse [fs]! how much better is thy [2fs] love than wine! and the smell of thine [2fs] ointments than all spices!
11. Thy [2fs] lips, O [my] spouse [fs], drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy [2fs] tongue; and the smell of thy [2fs] garments is like the smell of Lebanon.
12. A garden inclosed is my [1cs] sister [fs] [*Was Solomon's new bride already related to him somehow?*], [my] spouse [fs]; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
13. Thy [fs] plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,
14. Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:
15. A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.
16. [*Solomon's new bride from Lebanon*] Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my [1cs] garden [cs], that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my [1cs] beloved [ms] come [*let come = 3ms*] into his [3ms] garden, and eat his [NKJV/NIV its] pleasant fruits.

Chapter 5

1. [*Solomon, to his new bride from Lebanon, a continuation from ch.4. (Possibly the shepherd - to the young lady.)*] I [1cs] am come into my [1cs] garden, my [1cs] sister [fs], my [1cs] spouse [fs]: I [1cs] have gathered my [1cs] myrrh with my [1cs] spice; I [1cs] have eaten my [1cs] honeycomb with my [1cs] honey; I [1cs] have drunk my [1cs] wine with my [1cs] milk: eat, [*Addressing his other companions present*] O friends [mp]; drink [mp], yea, drink [mp] abundantly, O beloved [mp].

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ACT THREE 5:2 – 6:3

Scene: Later, in the palace harem chambers.

5:2-7 The young lady relates a story to the harem similar to that in 2:8-3:5, in which the shepherd sneaks up to the palace at night to see her again, and when she goes to open the door to meet him, he is gone and she again sneaks out to look for him. However, this time she is caught by night watchmen who beat her.

2. [*The young lady, relating a story to the harem - speaking of the shepherd, who has snuck into the harem palace area at night.*] I [1cs] sleep, but my [1cs] heart waketh: it is the voice of my [1cs] beloved [ms] that knocketh [ms], [saying,] [*Shepherd:*] “ Open [fs] to me [1cs] , my [1cs] sister [fs], my [1cs] love [fs], my [1cs] dove [fs], my [1cs] undefiled [fs]: for my [1cs] head is filled with dew, and my [1cs] locks with the drops of the night.
3. I [1cs] have put off my [1cs] coat; how shall I [1cs] put it on? I [1cs] have washed my [1cs] feet; how shall I [1cs] defile them [3mp]? ”

4. *[The young lady again, continuing the story]* My *[1cs]* beloved put in his *[3ms]* hand by the hole *[NKJV latch / NIV latch opening]* of the door, and my *[1cs]* bowels were moved for him *[3ms]*.
5. I *[1cs]* rose up to open *[the door]* to my *[1cs]* beloved *[ms]*; and my *[1cs]* hands dropped with myrrh, and my *[1cs]* fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.
6. I *[1cs]* opened *[the door]* to my *[1cs]* beloved *[ms]*; but my *[1cs]* beloved *[ms]* had withdrawn himself *[NKJV had turned away / NIV had left]*, and was gone *[3ms]*: my *[1cs]* soul failed when he *[3ms]* spake: *[She then snuck out to look for him]* I *[1cs]* sought him *[3ms]*, but I *[1cs]* could not find him *[3ms]*; I *[1cs]* called him *[3ms]*, but he *[3ms]* gave me *[1cs]* no answer.
7. The watchmen *[mp]* that went about the city found *[cp]* me *[1cs]*, they *[3cp]* smote me *[1cs]*, they *[3ms]* wounded me *[1cs]*; the keepers *[mp]* of the walls took away *[3cp]* my *[1cs]* veil from me *[1cs]*. *[Compare this with a similar scenario earlier in 3:2, where she had snuck out to look for the shepherd, and encountered watchmen without reprisal; however, this time she was beaten for sneaking out.]*

5:8,9 The young lady issues a charge, and the women of the harem respond by asking what is so special about the shepherd.

8. I *[1cs]* charge you *[2mp]*, O daughters *[fp]* of Jerusalem, if ye *[2mp]* find my *[1cs]* beloved *[ms]*, that ye *[2mp]* tell him *[3ms]*, that I *[1cs]* am sick *[fs prtepl]* of love *[i.e. lovesick]*.
9. *[The harem respond]* What is thy *[2fs]* beloved *[ms]* more than another beloved *[ms]*, O thou fairest *[fs]* among women *[fp]*? what is thy *[2fs]* beloved *[ms]* more than another beloved *[ms]*, that thou *[2fs]* dost so charge us *[1cp]*? *[“What’s so special about him?”]*

5:10-16 The young lady tells the harem what she finds attractive about him.

10. *[The young lady replies]* My *[1cs]* beloved *[ms]* *[i.e. the shepherd]* is white and ruddy, the chiefest *[ms]* among ten thousand.
11. His *[3ms]* head is as the most fine gold, his *[3ms]* locks are bushy, and black as a raven.
12. His *[3ms]* eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.
13. His *[3ms]* cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his *[3ms]* lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.
14. His *[3ms]* hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his *[3ms]* belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.
15. His *[3ms]* legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his *[3ms]* countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.
16. His *[3ms]* mouth is most sweet: yea, he *[3ms]* is altogether lovely. This *[ms]* is my *[1cs]* beloved *[ms]*, and this is my *[1cs]* friend *[ms]*, O daughters *[fp]* of Jerusalem.

Chapter 6

6:1-3 The women of the harem express a desire to see the shepherd, too. She responds.

1. *[The harem, perhaps including their minders(?), to the young lady]* Whither is thy *[2fs]* beloved *[ms]* gone *[3ms]*, O thou fairest *[fs]* among women *[fp]*? whither is thy *[2fs]* beloved *[ms]* turned aside *[3ms]*? that we *[1cp]* may seek him *[prob ms or 3ms]* with thee *[2fs]*.
2. *[The young lady responds]* My *[1cs]* beloved *[ms]* is gone *[3ms]* down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.
3. I *[1cs]* am my *[1cs]* beloved's *[ms]*, and my *[1cs]* beloved *[ms]* is mine *[1cs]*: he *[ms]* feedeth among the lilies.

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ACT FOUR 6:4 – 8:4

Scene: Later, in the palace harem chambers.

The exact identity of the male speaker is unclear. Most likely, the speaker is King Solomon, and this scene probably takes place in a private chamber away from the harem.

There is a possibility that the male speaker is the shepherd, and the location unknown, though some of the language and imagery in this speech closely resembles Solomon's speech in 4:1-16. For example: being overwhelmed by the lady's eyes (compare 6:5 here with 4:9 earlier); the comparison of her teeth to sheep (compare 6:6 here & 4:2 earlier); the comparison of her hair to a flock of goats (compare 6:5 here with 4:1 earlier); etc.

6:4-12 Some time later, at the palace harem, in a private chamber, Solomon expresses his love for the young lady. The speech mentions 60 queens, 80 concubines and virgins without number (6:8), a reference to Solomon's bevy of women.

4. [Probably Solomon (or the shepherd), to the young lady] Thou [2fs] art beautiful [fs], O my [1cs] love [fs], as Tirzah, comely [fs] as Jerusalem, terrible [NKJV awesome / NIV majestic] [fs] as [an army] with banners.
5. Turn away [fs] thine [2fs] eyes from me [1cs], for they have overcome me [1cs]: thy [2fs] hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.
6. Thy [2fs] teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.
7. As a piece of a pomegranate are thy [2fs] temples within thy locks [NKJV/NIV veil].
8. There are threescore queens [fp], and fourscore concubines [fp], and virgins [fp] without number.
9. My [1cs] dove [fs], my [1cs] undefiled [fs] is but one [fs] [i.e. one of the virgins]; she [fs] is the only one of her [3fs] mother [fs], she [3fs] is the choice one [fs] of her [NKJV/NIV the one] that bare her [3fs]. The daughters [3cp] [i.e. the harem – note same gender anomaly] saw her [3fs], and blessed [3mp] her [3fs]; yea, the queens [fp] and the concubines [fp], and they [3mp] praised her [3fs].
10. Who is she [fs] that looketh forth [fs] as the morning, fair [fs] as the moon, clear [fs] as the sun, and terrible [NKJV awesome / NIV majestic] [fs] as [an army] with banners?
11. I [1cs] went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded.
12. Or ever I [1cs] was aware, my [1cs] soul made me [1cs] like the chariots of Amminadib [NKJV my noble people] / NIV my people].

A brief aside, in the palace harem chambers. The harem calls out in hope for the return of the young lady. An unknown speaker (perhaps one of the harem minders?) asks the women of the harem what they see in the young lady. 6:13 contains the only occurrences of her being referred to as a "Shulamite" in the entire text of the song.

13. [The harem, calling in hope] Return [fs], return [fs], O Shulamite [fs]; return [fs], return [fs], that we [1cp] may look upon thee [2fs].

[Another speaker - A harem minder? - in response] What will ye [2mp] see in the Shulamite [fs]? As it were the company of two armies [NKJV As it were, the dance of two camps? / NIV as on the dance of the Mahanaim?].

7:1-9a Back in the private palace chamber, Solomon continues his flattery. Some of the language is similar to that of Solomon's speech in 4:1-16 (e.g. breasts like two fawns 7:3,7,8 cp 4:5; neck like a tower 4:4 cp 7:4).

Chapter 7

1. [*Probably Solomon again - to the young lady*] How beautiful are thy [2fs] feet with shoes, O prince's [ms] daughter [fs]! the joints of thy [2fs] thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.
2. Thy [2fs] navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy [fs] belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.
3. Thy [2fs] two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.
4. Thy [2fs] neck is as a tower of ivory; thine [2fs] eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy [2fs] nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.
5. Thine [2fs] head upon thee [2fs] is like Carmel, and the hair of thine [2fs] head like purple; [the] [NKJV a / NIV the] king [ms] is held in the galleries [NKJV held captive by your tresses / NIV held captive by its tresses].
6. How fair [2fs] and how pleasant [2fs] art thou [2fs], O love [fs], for delights!
7. This [fs] thy [2fs] stature is like to a palm tree, and thy [2fs] breasts to clusters of grapes.
8. I [1cs] said, I [1cs] will go up to the palm tree, I [1cs] will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy [2fs] breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy [2fs] nose [NJKV/NIV breath] like apples;
9. And the roof of thy [2fs] mouth like the best wine ... [NKJV: 9. {Him:} The roof of your mouth is like the best wine. NIV: 9. {He:} and your mouth like the best wine. [- the end of this portion of Solomon's speech]

7:9b,10 Possibly an aside by the young lady. Solomon has just told her that she is like the best wine; she takes that image and thinks of the shepherd whom she really loves.

[Young lady, aside – thinking, in reference to the shepherd] for my [1cs] beloved [ms], that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those [mp] that are asleep to speak. [NKJV {Her:} The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers. / NIV {She:} May the wine go straight to my lover, flowing gently over lips and teeth. [Solomon has just told her she is like the best wine, but her thoughts are of wishing to be with her true love, the shepherd]

10. I [1cs] am my beloved's [ms], and his [3ms] desire is toward me [1cs].

7:11-13 Solomon invites her to go to the countryside with him.

11. [*Young lady, to the shepherd, an imagined conversation*] Come [3fs], my [1cs] beloved [ms], let us [1cp] go forth into the field; let us [1cp] lodge in the villages.
12. Let us [1cp] get up early to the vineyards; let us [1cp] see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I [1cs] give thee my [1cs] loves [NKJV/NIV love].
13. [*The Shepherd*] The mandrakes give a smell, and at our [1cp] gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I [1cs] have laid up for thee [2fs],

[Young lady] O my [1cs] beloved [ms].

Chapter 8

8:1,2 The young lady subtly repels Solomon's advances.

1. [*Young lady*] O that thou [Solomon] [2ms] wert as my [1cs] brother [ms], that sucked [ms] the breasts of my [1cs] mother [fs]! when I [1cs] should find thee [2ms] without, I [1cs] would kiss thee [2ms]; yea, I [1cs] should not be despised [3mp].

2. I [1cs] would lead thee [2ms], and bring [1cs] thee [2ms] into my [1cs] mother's [fs] house, who [3fs] would instruct me [1cs]: I [1cs] would cause thee [2ms] to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my [1cs] pomegranate.

8:3,4 Solomon falls asleep and the young lady once again requests that the harem “stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please”.

3. [Young lady, to the harem] His [Solomon's] [3ms] left hand [should be] [NKJV/NIV is] under my [1cs] head, and his [3ms] right hand [should] embrace me [1cs]. [NKJV/NIV His left hand/arm is under my head, and his right hand/arm embraces me]

4. I [1cs] charge you [2mp], O daughters [fp] of Jerusalem, that ye [2mp] stir not up, nor awake [2mp] [my] love, until he [NKJV/NIV it] please. [[NKJV/NIV sense: do not stir up love until it pleases.]] similar to 2:7 & 3:5. Requesting that the harem not wake up Solomon, as he will want to seduce her.

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ACT FIVE 8:5-14

Scene: Later, at the shepherd's home in the countryside.

8:5a In contrast to the question earlier in 3:6 about who this was coming out of the wilderness (the answer there being Solomon returning to his home in Jerusalem), this question by the shepherd relates to the young lady returning to her true love in the countryside.

5. [Shepherd, in contrast to Solomon in 3:6] Who is this [fs] that cometh up [fs] from the wilderness, leaning upon [fs] her [3fs] beloved [ms]?

8:5b-7 The young lady speaks of her commitment to the shepherd.

[Young lady] I [1cs] raised thee [2ms] up under the apple tree: there thy [2ms] mother [fs] brought [2fs] thee [2ms] forth: [NLT I aroused you under the apple tree, where your mother gave you birth] there she [3fs] brought [thee] forth that [3fs] bare thee [2ms].

6. Set me [1cs] as a seal upon thine [2ms] heart, as a seal upon thine [2ms] arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

7. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned [NKJV despised / NIV scorned].

8:8,9 The shepherd's brothers (or possibly other local villagers?) speak of their role in protecting their young sister, still a child, should she, in years to come, find herself in the same position as the young lady (i.e. being seconded to be part of the king's harem). This is possibly the young lady recalling the words of her older brothers from some years earlier.

8. [The shepherd's brothers, or other local villagers?] We [1cp] have a little sister [fs], and she [3fs] hath no breasts [a young girl]: what shall we [1cp] do for our [1cp] sister [fs] in the day when she [3fs] shall be spoken for [3ms] [i.e. taken to be part of Solomon's harem]?

9. If she [3fs] be a wall [i.e. repels advances], we [1cp] will build upon her a palace of silver [i.e. we will honour her]: and if she [3fs] be a door [i.e. welcomes advances], we [1cp] will inclose her with boards of cedar [i.e. do our best to protect her].

8:10-12 *The young lady alludes to how she resisted Solomon's advances and kept her virginity in the process.*

10. [*Young lady, now speaking of the present*] I [1cs] am a wall [*i.e. I have repelled advances*], and my [1cs] breasts like towers [*a young mature woman*]: then was I [cs] in his [3ms] [Solomon's] eyes as one [fs] that found favour.

11. Solomon had [3ms] a vineyard at Baalhamon; he [3ms] let out the vineyard unto keepers [mp] [NIV tenants]; every one [NIV each] [ms] for the fruit thereof was to bring [3ms] a thousand pieces of silver. [*Solomon allowed women from his harem to go with men, in exchange for payment to Solomon*]

12. My [1cs] vineyard, which is mine [1cs], is before me [1cs]: thou [2ms], O [NKJV/NIV You] Solomon [*in the third person, Solomon himself not present in this scene*], must have a thousand [*pieces of silver*], and those [mp] that keep the fruit thereof two hundred [*pieces of silver*]. [*i.e. the minders were given a percentage of the payment*]

8:13,14 *The young lady requests an audible signal from a local acting as a lookout, so that the young lady and the shepherd do not get caught together. The song concludes with her urging the shepherd to flee the scene, lest he be apprehended.*

13. [*The young lady continues*] Thou [fs] that dwellest in the gardens, the companions [mp] hearken [mp] to thy [2fs] voice: cause me [1cs] to hear it. [NKJV *You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your voice – let me hear it!* / NIV *You who dwell in the gardens, with friends in attendance, let me hear your voice!*]

14. [*Young lady, to the shepherd*] Make haste [ms], my [1cs] beloved [ms], and be thou [*imperative*] like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices. [*“Go quickly, now!”*]