

Lover and Beloved

Song of Songs

by Don Falkos

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The First Encounter

There was once a young woman who served in the palace of the king. She was in love with the palace shepherd, as was he with her. She couldn't see him as often as she wished, so their brief moments together were precious. "Kiss me," she said, "and forget all the other young women who love you. Tell me, my love, where are you leading your flock today?"

"You don't need to know that. Just follow the tracks of my flock."

When she found him, they lay down on the grass together, his head between her breasts as he said, "You are breathtakingly beautiful and so exhilarating."

"And you are so very handsome, my love."

"Compared to other women you are a lily among thorns." He embraced her and satisfied her longings.

The Second Encounter

One afternoon while his Beloved was at work in the palace the shepherd crept up to a window and peered in at her. He caught her attention and pleaded, "Come away with me, my darling. Spring is in the air."

She couldn't go. Late that night she yearned for her Lover. He filled her thoughts. "My Lover is mine, and I am his. Come to me, my love." But he didn't come. She got out of bed and roamed the city looking for him, searching street after street, square after square. Finally, she found him. She threw her arms around him and refused to let go. Then the Beloved led her Lover back to her house and into her bed.

The Third Encounter

The Lover whispered to his Beloved, "How beautiful you are, my darling. Your eyes are beguiling; the waves of your long, black hair enchanting. Your smile is bright and flawless; your lips inviting. Your neck is regal; your breasts tender and beautiful. You have stolen my heart; your love delights me. You are my own private garden, my treasure, a secluded spring, a hidden fountain. Your thighs shelter a paradise of choice fruits. You are a garden fountain, a well of fresh water."

She replied, "Come into your garden, my love; taste its finest fruits."

And so he entered his garden and they both drank deeply of their love.

The Fourth Encounter

The Beloved was asleep, dreaming of her Lover, when there was a knock at her door. "Open to me, my darling. It's cold and damp out here."

She replied, "I'm already undressed for the night."

Her Lover attempted to unlatch the door, and her heart pounded with excitement. She leapt from her bed and ran to the door. She pulled back the bolt and opened to her Lover, but he was gone. Her heart sank. She looked for him, but didn't find him. She called out to him, but he didn't answer.

She spoke into the night, "Send my Lover back to me. I am faint with passion. My Lover is ruggedly handsome, better looking than any other man. His wavy hair is black as night. His eyes are dark and deep; his lips are luscious. I can feel the strength of his arms when they're around me. His physique is unmatched, awe-inspiring, majestic. He speaks so sweetly and is desirable in every way. I am my Lover's, and he is mine."

The Fifth Encounter

The Beloved went out to the grove to see the first signs of spring. Her Lover once again praised her beauty. "Your eyes hold me captive. Your hair is so lovely as it flows over your shoulders. Your smile is flawless. Among all the women in the world I choose you. Even other young women praise your beauty, calling you 'fair as the moon', 'bright as the sun', 'majestic as the stars'.

"Your feet are beautiful; your legs graceful. The secret place nestled between your thighs is utterly intoxicating. Your belly is soft and silken. Your breasts are tender and beautiful. Your neck is lovely; your eyes serene and gentle. Your nose is regal. Your hair crowns your head in majesty.

"How beautiful and pleasing you are with all your delights. You are as stately as a palm tree, your breasts its fruit. I will climb the tree and take hold of its fruit. Your breasts are irresistible, your breath fragrant, your kisses as exciting as the finest wine."

"Oh, my darling," replied the Beloved, "let's go out and spend the night in the countryside. Early in the morning, among the blossoms of the vineyard, all the delicacies I have saved for you will be yours. You will be intoxicated by the wine of my love, and I will be engulfed in your embrace."

The Sixth Encounter

The Beloved said to her Lover, "Our love is like an intensely blazing fire that cannot be put out. If the king were to offer all of his wealth in exchange for my affections, I would turn from him and walk away. You are my Lover, my life, the only one I want. Hold me ever in your heart.

"When I was a girl, my brothers protected me from harm. But now I am a woman; my breasts have developed; and you like the way I look. My body is mine to give, and I give it to you."

"Oh, my darling, that I might always be with you."

"Then come, my love. Be with me, and be happy."