

King Solomon's
Show of Shows
A One Act Play based on Song of Solomon

By John Cospers

KING SOLOMON'S SHOW OF SHOWS
CAST OF CHARACTERS

Will & Suzanne Cupid	Proprietors of Cupid's Hideaway, a romantic hotel for couples. After years of unhappy marriage, they are all but ready to divorce.
Randy & Sarah	A newlywed couple.
Ben & Gloria	A pastor and his wife. Empty-nesters trying to reconnect.
The King	King Solomon
Beloved	Solomon's wife
Corey	The bellman, a sarcastic single guy.
Kim	The maid, a hopeless young divorcee.
Diana	The Beloved's friend and maidservant.

SETTING

The play takes place in a modern hotel. Everything is modern – except Solomon, his Beloved, and Diana, who are VERY old fashioned and anachronistic. It is their entrance into the modern hotel and interactions with the modern characters that set the story moving and bring everyone to a deeper understanding of marriage.

SCENE ONE

Front desk at a nice hotel, Cupid's Hideaway. Will and Suzanne stand behind the counter, the perfect picture of a married couple. Randy and Sarah are on the other side, also looking happy.

WILL: Okay, Mr. and Mrs. Williams, we have you down for five nights of blissful romance.

RANDY: Sounds about right.

SUZANNE: Dinner's at six if you care to join us.

SARAH: Thank you, but I think we might just crash. I've been going non-stop since three days before the wedding, and I am exhausted!

SUZANNE: Not to worry. You relax and sleep in all you want. You two will be very happy here.

WILL: Aw, Suzanne, these two would be happy anywhere! Just look at them!

Randy and Sarah snuggle.

SUZANNE: How long have you been married?

RANDY: Two days.

WILL: Two days, and they said it wouldn't last, huh?

They all laugh. Will and Suzanne's laughs are obviously forced.

WILL: Well, you're definitely at the right place for a honeymoon.

RANDY: That's what the brochure said!

SUZANNE: You read our brochure?

SARAH: That's the whole reason we came here. We talked about going to the mountains, but then a co-worker gave us a copy. You guys looked so happy in the pictures. You could tell this is a labor of love.

WILL: It is, it is. We've been married nineteen wonderful years.

SUZANNE: Twenty, darling.

WILL: Twenty? Where does the time go?

RANDY: I know. We want to enjoy every moment.

SARAH: Yes we do.

WILL: Then don't waste time down here talking to us old folks. *(rings a bell)* Corey!

Corey enters.

COREY: Yes, sir, Mr. Cupid. What can I do for you?

WILL: This lovely young couple is here to celebrate their honeymoon.

COREY: Well isn't that something? Hi, folks. I'm Corey. Anything you need? You ask.

SARAH: Thank you, Corey.

SUZANNE: Take their bags up to room 300, please.

COREY: Oh, the Honeymoon Suite. You two are in for a real treat. *(grabs the luggage)* This way folks.

SUZANNE: Enjoy the room!
RANDY: Thank you guys so much!
WILL: Have a marvelous time!
SARAH: Thank you!

Sarah and Randy exit with Corey. As soon as they are gone, Will and Suzanne back away and stop pretending to like one another.

WILL: Yuck! One more minute that close to you, I was going to throw up.
SUZANNE: You think I like it any better than you?
WILL: Believe me, it's harder on me than it is on you.
SUZANNE: Any why is that?
WILL: Because you're not the one who has to look at your face!
SUZANNE: How dare you! May I remind you it was your idea to out both our faces on all the advertising for this place?
WILL: I remember.
SUZANNE: So when the busy season started and we'd both had enough, we couldn't get the divorce we wanted because this place would go under if we both weren't here!
WILL: I know, I know. Though I don't see what's keeping you. You're not going to take this place in the divorce.
SUZANNE: Why not? I've put just as much work into this hotel as you.
WILL: It's called Cupid's Hideaway! My name will always be Cupid.
SUZANNE: I can change the name.
WILL: Oh yeah. Because everyone will line up to spend a weekend at Bizarro's Hideaway!
SUZANNE: It's Pizarro!
WILL: I'm the one who lived with you all these years. Believe me, Bizarro fits you better!

Ben and Gloria enter. Will and Suzanne quickly put on a happy face.

BEN: Hello, all you happy people.
WILL: Pastor and Mrs. Baker, how are you?
BEN: Swell, just swell. The Mrs. and I spent the whole morning on the beach, just getting to know one another again.
GLORIA: Do you know, in all the years we've been married, he never knew I enjoyed auto racing?
WILL: Really? What a lucky break for you, Pastor.
BEN: Not really. Can't stand auto races myself. I prefer the ponies.
GLORIA: Oh don't even talk about that animal cruelty.
BEN: Those horses live better than we did when I was in seminary.
GLORIA: Prisoners living under Geneva convention conditions live better lives than we did in seminary.
BEN: True, true.
WILL: Well, at least you two had fun.
GLORIA: Yes, a little. I still can't get Ben to play in the surf with me.

BEN: There are jellyfish out there, darling.

GLORIA: Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

BEN: That's what I said when I suggested we rent ATV's and do a trail ride.

GLORIA: "Preacher's wife killed on second honeymoon in ATV crash." Is that the headline you want to go home to?

BEN: And so the search to reconnect continues.

SUZANNE: Don't give up, you two. You'll make it.

GLORIA: We've come this far, twenty-five years. No one's giving up yet.

Ben and Gloria exit.

WILL: Look at them. Those two need to just hang it up.

SUZANNE: That's a cheerful thought.

Kim enters.

WILL: Face it, Suzanne, it's not just us. Love doesn't last any more. The great age of romance is over. We know it. They're leaning it. Those young kids up in 300 will find out.

SUZANNE: You really believe romance is dead?

WILL: I wouldn't say dead. It simply has a much shorter life expectancy than it used to.

KIM: He's right, you know. I thought Donald and I would be together forever.

SUZANNE: Oh no.

WILL: Here she goes again.

KIM: He even promised me in the vows he wrote, "Together, our love will last forever."

SUZANNE: It was a lovely poem.

KIM: It was the lyrics to the song sung at Randy "Macho Man" Savage's TV wedding. He wrote them down at the last minute. And he was gone at the first opportunity. Ran off with the cabana girl.

WILL: You see? It doesn't matter how hard you try romance dies, and when it does, you might as well just quit.

The phone rings. Will answers.

WILL: Cupid's Hideaway... this is he...

Will's face turns to total shock as Suzanne goes on.

SUZANNE: I think you're over-simplifying, Will. If two people really love each other, they will make it work. Sure, feelings fade. But that's not the problem here. It's commitment. And I'm tired of being the only one--

WILL: Kim? Get those kids in 300 to move down to 200.

KIM: No way. I am not walking in on honeymooners. It's still too painful.

Kim exits.

SUZANNE: Will?
WILL: We need the honeymoon suite empty by tonight.
SUZANNE: I am not throwing those kids out.
WILL: Not even for the king?
SUZANNE: Don't play games.
WILL: I'm not, Suzanne! The King is coming with his wife, tonight!
SUZANNE: What??? Here???
WILL: They're on a second honeymoon. It's a total secret.
SUZANNE: Why are they coming here?
WILL: They liked what they saw in the brochure.
SUZANNE: Sounds like the king still believes in romance.
WILL: Whatever. Try as they might, I'm sure their marriage is on life support too. How long have they been married now?
SUZANNE: You really think the king, the wisest ruler we've ever had, can't keep romance alive?
WILL: I know he can't.
SUZANNE: Then let's bet the hotel on it.
WILL: What?
SUZANNE: If they leave here in love, I get the hotel. If they leave in shambles--
WILL: You're not going to win. I can't do that to you.
SUZANNE: Then what are you afraid of?

Will and Suzanne shake hands.

WILL: You're on. Get those kids out of 300. Kim! Corey! We have three hours to clean this place top to bottom!

Will and Suzanne exit.

SCENE 2

Corey and Kim enter, much more dressed than before.

KIM: Look at you, little toy soldier.
COREY: Quiet.
KIM: What's with the monkey suit?
COREY: You're one to talk.
KIM: We have to look our best. the king is coming.
COREY: So I hear. You think he tips well?

Ben and Gloria enter.

BEN: Say, Corey, what's all the commotion for?
COREY: We have special guests arriving this afternoon. The boss went down to the gate to greet them.
GLORIA: Special guests?

COREY: The king and his beloved.

GLORIA: Oh my goodness! I should have fixed myself up this morning.

Suzanne enters with Randy and Sarah.

SUZANNE: Thank you, and I do apologize again for the inconvenience.

RANDY: No apology necessary! You gave us the best honeymoon story so far.

SARAH: They'll never believe we got kicked out of our room for the king.

Will enters, carrying lots and lots of luggage.

WILL: Corey, a little help?

Corey runs to help him.

COREY: I guess the king and his wife don't travel light.

WILL: The king? Ha! This is his bride's maidservant's stuff.

COREY: His maidservant?

Diana enters.

DIANA: Thank you, Mr. Cupid. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you his royal highness King Solomon and his adoring wife.

WILL: *(aside to Suzanne)* We'll soon see about that.

The King and Beloved enter, totally smitten with one another.

BELOVED: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth— for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the maidens love you!

Everyone looks at each other awkward, except Diana, who admires the lovers, and the King and Beloved, who admire each other.

SUZANNE: Uh, welcome to Cupid's Hideaway. We are honored to have you.

BELOVED: Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers.

BEN: Wow, they are really in love.

DIANA: It's beautiful isn't it? We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine.

BELOVED: How right they are to adore you! Dark am I, yet lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon. Do not stare at me because I am dark, because I am darkened by the sun.

COREY: She does have a nice tan.

KIM: Probably a fake bake.

BELOVED: My mother's sons were angry with me and made me take care of the

vineyards; my own vineyard I have neglected. tell me, you whom I love, where you graze your flock and where you rest your sheep at midday. Why should I be like a veiled woman beside the flocks of your friends?

DIANA: If you do not know, most beautiful of women, follow the tracks of the sheep and graze your young goats by the tents of the shepherds.

WILL: *(aside to Suzanne)* Are you understanding a word of this?

SUZANNE: Shh, he is the king.

KING: I liken you, my darling, to a mare harnessed to one of the chariots of Pharaoh. Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings, your neck with strings of jewels. We will make you earrings of gold, studded with silver.

WILL: Uh, here's your key, your majesty. You're in room 300. Honeymoon suite.

BELOVED: While the king was at his table, my perfume spread its fragrance. My lover is to me a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts.

WILL: Corey, the bags?

COREY: Not, now, this is getting good.

WILL: Corey!

COREY: Oh all right.

Corey grabs the bags and exits. King and Beloved start to exit, admiring one another.

BELOVED: My lover is to me a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En Gedi.

KING: How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes are doves.

BELOVED: How handsome you are, my lover! Oh, how charming! And our bed is verdant.

RANDY: What bed? Do they mean the one at home? Or the one we just had?

KING: The beams of our house are cedars; our rafters are firs.

The King, Beloved, and Diana exit. Everyone stands around in disbelief.

BEN: Wow. Those two are crazy about each other.

SARAH: It's so romantic!

KIM: I think I'm gonna be sick.

Everyone but Will and Suzanne exits.

SUZANNE: Well, well, well, looks like Cupid just might lose his Hideaway.

WILL: The weekend isn't over yet!

Will and Suzanne exit.

SCENE 3

Randy and Sarah enter.

SARAH: Did you see those two this afternoon?

RANDY: Yeah, I saw it.

SARAH: Do you think we'll be that in love after twenty years of marriage?

RANDY: I don't know.

SARAH: You don't?

RANDY: Sarah, I gotta be honest, I've never seen a couple married that long stay happy. My parents got a divorce when I was still a kid. I can't imagine then saying the kinds of things those two were saying to each other.

SARAH: But it has to be possible. My parents are still happy. And you saw the king. He's crazy about her.

RANDY: And I hope I'll always be crazy about you. But it's not going to be easy.

The King and Beloved enter.

BELOVED: I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.

KING: Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the maidens.

The King exits.

RANDY: Hey, how's it going?

SARAH: We're so happy to be spending our honeymoon with you two. You seem so happy.

BELOVED: Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my lover among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.

SARAH: I know how you feel.

RANDY: Really?

BELOVED: Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love. His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me.

Kim walks through.

BELOVED: Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

KIM: Fine! Rub it in!

Waltz music plays. The King enters, dancing, carrying a rose. He dances around playfully, entertaining her and the young honeymooners. The King and Beloved are playful, flirting, and having a blast.

BELOVED: Listen! My lover! Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills. My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice. My lover spoke and said to me...

KING: Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming

vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me.

RANDY: Dude, your highness, please stop. You're setting the bar way too high.

SARAH: Leave him alone. He's in love.

KING: My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.

BELOVED: My lover is mine and I am his; he browses among the lilies. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, turn, my lover, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the rugged hills.

The King and Beloved dance off.

RANDY: No way. No way that'll be us.

SARAH: Randy!

RANDY: I can't be that guy. All that poetry and stuff... that's just not me. I'm not a poetry guys, Sarah. I don't do poems, I don't sing... I'm just not that romantic.

SARAH: I remember a guy climbing up to my window and singing the most off key version of the old 80's song "Sarah."

RANDY: It was awful.

SARAH: It was sweet.

RANDY: It wasn't poetic. I'm no King Solomon.

SARAH: Then don't be King Solomon. You be you, and I will love you for it until the day you die.

RANDY: Really?

SARAH: Absolutely.

Randy offers Sarah his hand, dramatically. She takes his hand. They dance around – until he steps on her foot.

RANDY: Oh my goodness! I am so sorry.

SARAH: It's okay.

RANDY: Well, I guess I'm no dancer either. You still love me?

They kiss.

SARAH: Always.

They exit.

SCENE 4

It is night time. Will enters in pajamas. He meets Suzanne on stage.

WILL: What's all the racket? Is the King okay?

SUZANNE: He's fine, far as I can tell.

WILL: So who's making all the noise?

SUZANNE: It's his wife.

WILL: Is she okay?

SUZANNE: She had a dream. A bad one from the sound of it. I called her maidservant down to help.

WILL: Trouble in paradise, huh?

SUZANNE: I didn't say that.

WILL: Why isn't the King here to comfort his lady? Is he gone? Stolen hence?

SUZANNE: Did you say "stolen hence"?

WILL: You think he's the only guy around here who says poetry?

SUZANNE: He's the only one who cares enough to use it on his wife.

Diana and Beloved enter. Will and Suzanne move to the counter to listen.

WILL: This ought to be interesting.

SUZANNE: Shh!

BELOVED: All night long on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him.

WILL: What did I tell you? He's gone.

SUZANNE: Be still. It was just a dream.

WILL: Are you sure?

BELOVED: I said to myself, "I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares; I will search for the one my heart loves." So I looked for him but did not find him.

WILL: Aww, the poor lady.

BELOVED: The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. "Have you seen the one my heart loves?" Scarcely had I passed them when I found the one my heart loves. I held him and would not let him go till I had brought him to my mother's house, to the room of the one who conceived me.

SUZANNE: She is so in love.

WILL: She is such a fool.

Kim passes through upstage.

BELOVED: Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

KIM: Okay! I heard you the first time!

Beloved and Diana watch Kim exit.

DIANA: You know it was all a dream. Your husband loves you, and he will never forsake you. Look!

The King enters.

KING: Who is this coming up from the desert like a column of smoke, perfumed with

myrrh and incense made from all the spices of the merchant? Look! It is Solomon's carriage, escorted by sixty warriors, the noblest of Israel, all of them wearing the sword, all experienced in battle, each with his sword at his side, prepared for the terrors of the night.

SUZANNE: You see? He comes to chase away her nightmares. That's love I tell you.

WILL: Yeah, yeah. I wish someone would chase away my nightmare.

SUZANNE: That makes two of us!

Will exits. The King and Beloved join hands.

BELOVED: King Solomon made for himself the carriage; he made it of wood from Lebanon. Its posts he made of silver, its base of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple, its interior lovingly inlaid by the daughters of Jerusalem.

Suzanne knocks something over. Beloved and the King see her.

SUZANNE: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt.

BELOVED: Come out, you daughters of Zion.

Suzanne steps out of hiding.

BELOVED: And look at King Solomon wearing the crown, the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day his heart rejoiced.

The King and Beloved exit. Suzanne walks to Diana.

DIANA: Are you okay?

SUZANNE: The day his heart rejoiced. I remember the day Will's heart rejoiced. The day both of our hearts joined as one and rejoiced. Tell me, can love that has died be aroused or awakened again?

Diana pats Suzanne on the arm. They exit.

SCENE FIVE

Corey is at the front desk. Ben and Gloria enter.

BEN: Afternoon, young man.

COREY: Pastor, Mrs. Baker. What can I do for you?

BEN: Well, we're looking for something fun to do this afternoon. Something that might help a couple old folks reconnect.

COREY: Have you ever been sailing?

GLORIA: No, but that sounds like fun.

COREY: Oh it's a great time. And on a day like this, it'll definitely make you two work together.

BEN: What do you say, dear?

GLORIA: It's worth a shot. Where do we go?

BEN: Head down to the marina, and look for Burt's Boats. I'll call Burt and let him know you're coming.

BEN: Thank you, thanks so much.

COREY: My pleasure. Have fun, kids.

Ben and Gloria exit. Corey picks up the phone.

COREY: Burt, it's Corey. I have a couple headed your way... Pastor and Mrs. Baker. Nice folks, looking for a fun time... Go easy on 'em, okay?

Corey hangs up. Kim enters and grunts.

COREY: Afternoon, Kim. I see you're in your usual good mood.

KIM: I am never getting out of here!

COREY: Is that a threat or a promise?

KIM: I can't do my job! They won't leave their rooms!

COREY: Who?

KIM: The King. And the newlyweds. They've been in there all day.

COREY: And you're surprised? Come on, they're newlyweds. And you've seen how the king is about his girl.

KIM: But why???

COREY: Wild guess? I'd say it's love.

KIM: There's no such thing as love, Corey.

COREY: Coulda fooled me, the way those couples carry on.

KIM: If love was real, I'd still be with Donald.

COREY: Donald was a jerk, and he never deserved you.

KIM: Don't you dare talk about the love of my life like that!

COREY: It's true, Kim. You wanted to be married so bad, you jumped in with the first guy who said "I love you." You have to be patient. Don't try to force love.

KIM: Yeah, yeah. Don't arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

COREY: Say, that's kind of poetic.

KIM: Yeah. I keep getting it from the Beloved one.

COREY: It's good advice.

KIM: Corey, I can't sit around and watch this love fest all day. Can you do something?

COREY: Look, if they want to stay in their rooms, that's their choice. Maybe that'll keep them together longer than the boss and his bride.

KIM: You mean the boss and her groom.

COREY: Whatever.

KIM: I'll be out back, trying to become dark and lovely like the tents of Kedar.

COREY: Have fun. I'll call you if they come out.

Kim exits. The King enters, smiling and refreshed.

COREY: Well, look who's out and about. Having a nice weekend, your highness?

The King smiles at Corey. He picks up a pad of paper and a pen from the counter to compose a poem. He writes as he talks.

COREY: That's what I thought. Now what can I arrange for you guys? A nice dinner? A boat ride? Shopping?

KING: How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful!

Corey looks at the audience, then the king, then the audience, then the king.

COREY: You're not talking to me, are you? Please say you don't mean me.

KING: Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Mount Gilead.

COREY: *(feels his short hair)* Okay, definitely not me. Wow, you've really got it for that girl. I'll admit, she is pretty.

KING: Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn, coming up from the washing. Each has its twin; not one of them is alone.

COREY: You know sheep are kinda fuzzy. White and pretty, but fuzzy. I'm not sure that's the metaphor you want there, pal.

KING: Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely.

COREY: That's a little better.

KING: Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate.

COREY: Note to self, look up the word pomegranate.

KING: Your neck is like the tower of David, built with elegance on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors.

COREY: You know I'd go with something softer for the neck than a tower. Girls like soft things.

KING: Your two breasts are like two fawns.

COREY: Say what?

KING: Like twin fawns of a gazelle that browse among the lilies.

COREY: *(looking out at the audience)* Can we say that in here? I know it's in the Bible, but wow, dude. That's... wow.

KING: Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of incense.

COREY: Dude, is it hot in here? I should turn down the A/C.

KING: All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you. Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, come with me from Lebanon. Descend from the crest of Amana, from the top of Senir, the summit of Hermon, from the lions' dens and the mountain haunts of the leopards.

COREY: Yeah, you might wanna keep her out of those places. Leopards and lions and ladies, not a safe mix, you know?

KING: You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride. You have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much more pleasing is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice!

COREY: You know, I'd stay away from the sister thing. Yeah, it's a little creepy in this day and age.

KING: Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride.

COREY: Now that was pretty.

KING: Milk and honey are under your tongue.

COREY: And that was steamy.

Beloved enters. The King walks over to her, leaving his poem on the front desk.

KING: The fragrance of your garments is like that of Lebanon. You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with choice fruits, with henna and nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices. You are a garden fountain, a well of flowing water streaming down from Lebanon.

COREY: If you don't like all that, he's got a lot more. *(holds up the poem)* Right here.

BELOVED: Awake, north wind, and come, south wind! Blow on my garden, that its fragrance may spread abroad. Let my lover come into his garden and taste its choice fruits.

KING: I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk.

The King and Beloved run off, back toward their room.

COREY: Eat, O friends, and drink; drink your fill, O lovers. *(sighs)* Eat your heart out, Corey.

Kim enters.

KIM: Was that the King? Is he out of his room yet?

COREY: And he just went back in.

KIM: Well when is he coming back out?

COREY: Oh, it may be a while.

Kim sighs and exits. Corey looks at the audience, then at the poem.

COREY: I am going to hang on to this stuff.

Corey tucks the poem in his coat and exits the other way.

SCENE 6

Ben and Gloria enter. Their clothes and hair are wet and a mess.

BEN: Well, that was quite an adventure.

GLORIA: I guess sailing just isn't our thing.

BEN: Yeah. A lot of things just don't click for us.

GLORIA: You think so?

BEN: Gloria, you've given me two amazing children, and twenty great years. I look back, and I wonder, where did all that time go?

GLORIA: It was fun while it lasted.

BEN: Yes, yes it was. Look, I don't want you to... What I mean is... I don't regret the last twenty years. And I don't want either of us to regret the next twenty. Do you know what I mean?

GLORIA: I do. Sometimes... sometimes you just have to admit that things aren't what they used to be. Much as we might want them.

BEN: I don't want to hold you back.

GLORIA: I don't want to hold you back.

BEN: If I thought there was a chance...

GLORIA: Ben, it's okay.

Ben nods.

BEN: Should we head home tonight?

GLORIA: Let's spend one more night. It's too long a drive.

BEN: Shall we go up?

GLORIA: Go ahead. I'm just going to sit here for a bit.

Ben exits. Gloria sits on a bench and starts to cry. Suzanne and Sarah enter.

SARAH: Mrs. Baker?

SUZANNE: Are you okay?

GLORIA: I'm fine.

SUZANNE: You don't look it. What's wrong?

GLORIA: It's over. Ben and me...

SARAH: Oh no!

GLORIA: We just decided, here and now. There's just nothing left.

SARAH: Oh, you poor thing.

SUZANNE: I am so sorry.

GLORIA: It's okay. You don't have to hang around on my account. Especially, you, Sarah. Go enjoy your husband.

SARAH: It's okay. I want to be here.

SUZANNE: What made you decide to call it quits?

GLORIA: I don't know. We tried so hard. We're just two different people now. Two very different people. And the feelings we had? Just gone. All gone.

SARAH: But you can't just give up. Marriage is a commitment. It's a vow you made to God and to each other.

GLORIA: That's why we came here. We wanted to honor that vow. But somehow...

SUZANNE: It's easier to walk away.

GLORIA: I feel so ashamed. I don't want to quit, but how can we keep it going?

SARAH: If you find out, tell me. I don't want Randy and I to grow apart.

GLORIA: Oh, sweetheart, I wouldn't wish that on you for the world. I pray you have a love like the King and his beloved.

SUZANNE: We should all be so lucky.

SARAH: Maybe you could spend a little time with them. Maybe some of their magic will rub off on you.

GLORIA: No. Ben's ready to give up. And if he's gonna call it quits... I don't think anything could inspire me to go after him.

Diana and Beloved enter. The girls watch and listen.

DIANA: I thought you were napping. Is everything okay?

BELOVED: I slept but my heart was awake. My eyes closed, and as soon as I did, I thought I heard him. "Listen!" I said. "My lover is knocking, saying 'Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my flawless one. My head is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of the night.'"

SARAH: Should we be listening—

SUZANNE: Shhh, hush, girl.

BELOVED: I have taken off my robe— must I put it on again? I have washed my feet— must I soil them again?

Suzanne, Gloria, and Sarah lean forward, intently listening to the story.

BELOVED: My lover thrust his hand through the latch-opening; my heart began to pound for him. I arose to open for my lover, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with flowing myrrh, on the handles of the lock.

SARAH: Open the door already!

SUZANNE/GLORIA: Shhh!

BELOVED: I opened for my lover, but my lover had left.

Suzanne, Gloria, and Sarah fall forward off the bench. They quickly get back up, holding hands, totally into the story.

BELOVED: He was gone. My heart sank at his departure. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him but he did not answer.

GLORIA: No!

SUZANNE: Where did he go?

BELOVED: The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. They beat me, they bruised me; they took away my cloak, those watchmen of the walls!

SARAH: You poor thing!

BELOVED: O daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you— if you find my lover, what will you tell him? Tell him I am faint with love.

SUZANNE/GLORIA/SARAH: We will!

Diana and Beloved look at the others.

SUZANNE: Sorry. Couldn't help hearing.

DIANA: It's quite all right. My mistress has such frightful dreams sometimes. She is so in love, it sometimes makes her sick.

GLORIA: It's beautiful though. The way those two are in love.

SUZANNE: You can tell how much she loves him.

DIANA: My lady, how is your beloved better than others, most beautiful of women?
How is your beloved better than others, that you charge us so?

The other girls gather around; it's a big chick moment.

BELOVED: My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand.

GLORIA: I hear that.

BELOVED: His head is purest gold; his hair is wavy and black as a raven. His eyes are like doves by the water streams, washed in milk, mounted like jewels.

GLORIA: That sounds just like Ben. His eyes always got me. The way they sparkle.

BELOVED: His cheeks are like beds of spice yielding perfume. His lips are like lilies dripping with myrrh. His arms are rods of gold set with chrysolite.

GLORIA: That's definitely Ben.

SARAH: I hear you. That's Randy too.

BELOVED: His body is like polished ivory decorated with sapphires. His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of pure gold.

GLORIA: I love Ben's legs.

BELOVED: His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars. His mouth is sweetness itself; he is altogether lovely. This is my lover, this my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

GLORIA: Oh wow.

SARAH: Wow.

SUZANNE: Yeah.

Ben enters. The girls all look.

BEN: Uh, Gloria?

Gloria walks over to Ben.

BEN: I was just wondering if we—

Gloria grabs him and kisses him.

BEN: What was that?

GLORIA: You are not getting rid of me, my lover, my friend.

Gloria drags Ben away.

SARAH: Thanks for the walk, Suzanne. I'm just gonna go see what Randy's doing.

Sarah takes a few steps then runs off as well. Diana turns to Suzanne. Suzanne starts to walk away.

DIANA: Where has your lover gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your

lover turn, that we may look for him with you?

Suzanne looks back, then exits. Beloved and Diana exit as well.

SCENE 7

Will enters. Kim enters opposite him.

WILL: Psst! Kim!

KIM: Yeah?

WILL: What's all this I hear about the King leaving his bride? Is it true?

KIM: The king left his bride?

WILL: I heard her whining about it out in the garden to that friend of hers. He's gone, isn't he?

KIM: The king? Yes, he is.

WILL: I knew it! Ha ha!

KIM: Gone back into his suite with her.

WILL: With whom?

KIM: Who else? His bride! His beloved! They haven't left that room for more than ten minutes a piece. And now, thanks to the two of them, no one else is leaving their rooms either! Everyone's celebrating their love and marriages.

WILL: Really?

KIM: Even the old pastor and his wife are locked in their rooms now. How am I supposed to do my job when no one will leave their room?

WILL: Then it's over. I'm done, I'm ruined. She beat me.

KIM: Who beat you?

WILL: Suzanne. We made a bet over the weekend. If the king left his bride, I would get the hotel in the divorce.

KIM: You're really going to divorce this time?

WILL: I can't take another year with her. I want her out of here and out of my life. Looks like I'll be getting one, but not the other.

KIM: How could you bet against King Solomon?

WILL: Because I don't believe in love. Not love that lasts a lifetime anyway.

KIM: Open your eyes, Mr. Cupid. We have two old married couples and one set of newlyweds that seem to be making a pretty strong case. One would even think—Forget it.

WILL: What? Say it, Kim.

KIM: Even you and Mrs. Cupid could make things work if you got over yourselves.

WILL: Never.

KIM: Come on, Mr. Cupid. Do you really want to walk out on all this?

WILL: Not all, just her!

KIM: You made it this far, didn't you? So what you've had a rough couple of years? You're both pretty nice people, far as I can tell, and just as capable as anyone of making things work out.

WILL: That means so much coming from a hopeless case like you.

KIM: I was only trying to help.

WILL: Yeah? You wanna help, bust that king and his wife up. Then I'll give you a raise when I take over as sole owner.

Will exits.

KIM: Hopeless case. Who says I'm hopeless? Well me, for one. It's not that I'm hopeless, is it? I just haven't found the right one.

Beloved and the King walks across, arm in arm.

BELOVED: My lover has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to browse in the gardens and to gather lilies. I am my lover's and my lover is mine; he browses among the lilies.

KING: You are beautiful, my darling, as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, majestic as troops with banners. Turn your eyes from me; they overwhelm me.

Beloved and the King exit.

KIM: Here's the big question no one's answered. Why can't I find the right one? How come everyone seems capable of falling in love except little me? What do I have to do to make love desire to awaken? When's gonna be my time, Lord? When??

Corey enters, rehearsing his speech. Kim turns to him, eyes suddenly filled with hope and expectation as she hears his words.

COREY: Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of sheep coming up from the washing. Each has its twin, not one of them is alone. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate.

Corey and kim are face to face. They kiss, then they step back, thinking, pondering the kiss. Then, together, they shake their heads no.

COREY/KIM: Nah.

They exit opposite ways.

SCENE 8

The King and Beloved enter.

KING: Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number; but my dove, my perfect one, is unique, the only daughter of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The maidens saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines praised her.

Diana enters.

DIANA: Who is this that appears like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession?

KING: I went down to the grove of nut trees to look at the new growth in the valley, to see if the vines had budded or the pomegranates were in bloom. Before I realized it, my desire set me among the royal chariots of my people.

Beloved hides her face in the King, blushing. Will enters upstage behind the counter, listening.

DIANA: Come back, come back, O Shulammitte; come back, come back, that we may gaze on you!

KING: Why would you gaze on the Shulammitte as on the dance of Mahanaim?

Beloved looks up. The King, Beloved, and Diana start to exit. Suzanne enters. She hesitates, seeing Will, then walks up beside him.

KING: How beautiful your sandaled feet, O prince's daughter! Your graceful legs are like jewels, the work of a craftsman's hands.

The King, Beloved, and Diana exit.

SUZANNE: It's sweet, isn't it? Those two are really crazy about each other.

WILL: There's no need to gloat.

SUZANNE: I'm not gloating. It's just an observation.

WILL: You won, okay? The King's in love. Love rules triumphant. Cupid's Hideaway is all yours.

SUZANNE: Will, I wasn't even thinking of that.

WILL: Don't lie to me. This is what you wanted.

SUZANNE: How do you know what I want? We've hardly talked for the last few years.

WILL: Then what do you want? Hmm? Tell me, I'm listening.

SUZANNE: No.

WILL: You want to talk? Talk!

SUZANNE: Not while you're acting like a jerk.

WILL: Sure, I'm the jerk. Blame it all on the guy.

SUZANNE: We're both to blame in this. We both gave up a long time ago. It's just...

WILL: What? You think because everyone else in this hotel has become all lovey-dovey, we're just gonna fall in with the rest?

SUZANNE: Can you honestly tell me you wouldn't welcome that!

WILL: Yes! I'm not gonna fall for it! Here, in this place, people come to rekindle romances that are only going to fade out again.

SUZANNE: That's why you can't just take a weekend to rekindle love. You have to keep adding wood, fanning the flames.

WILL: The forest is empty. My strength is gone. Great, now even I'm talking in poetry.

SUZANNE: Will, I don't want you to go.

WILL: I'm a man of my word. We made a wager; I lost. What other choice do I have?

SUZANNE: You want to walk away? Fine. Go. No point in sticking around if we're not in this together.

WILL: We haven't been in anything together for years except this... cesspool of a hotel!

Suzanne exits.

WILL: I'm not wrong in this, am I? This is better for both of us. She'll move on and be happy. I know I'll be happy. And all I leave behind is a hotel.

Will starts to leave. The King and Beloved enter. Will stops, listens. During the monologue, Corey enters.

KING: Your navel is a rounded goblet that never lacks blended wine. Your waist is a mound of wheat encircled by lilies. Your breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are the pools of Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon looking toward Damascus. Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel. Your hair is like royal tapestry; the king is held captive by its tresses. How beautiful you are and how pleasing, O love, with your delights! Your stature is like that of the palm, and your breasts like clusters of fruit.

WILL: This guy is good, huh?

COREY: Oh, he's amazing.

KING: I said, "I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its fruit." May your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, and your mouth like the best wine.

The King and Beloved exit.

COREY: Wow. I hope when it happens for me, I'm that in love after twenty years. *(looks at Will)* You okay?

WILL: Corey, I've made a huge mistake.

Corey and Will exit.

SCENE 9

Suzanne enters at the counter. Transition music plays. Randy and Sarah enter with their luggage, followed by Ben and Gloria, both couples checking out. Corey helps with the bags, then exits. Kim enters after them.

GLORIA: Well this has been so much fun.

SARAH: Yes, it was really good getting to know you guys.

RANDY: Thanks for your encouragement, and your wisdom.

BEN: Yes, don't wait until the kids are gone to get romantic. Keep the fire burning.

RANDY: We will. I wanna keep annoying this girl until the day I die.

SARAH: I wouldn't have it any other way.

BEN: And thank you, Suzanne.

RANDY: Yes, thank you.

BEN: This is a magical place you have. I hope you and Will keep it together a long time.

SUZANNE: Thank you. That means a lot.

SARAH: You know, I forgot to say goodbye to King Solomon and his wife.

RANDY: Send them a letter. I'm not knocking on that door.

KIM: Like you guys were any different. At least now that you're leaving, I can do my job and clean a few rooms.

BEN: Sorry about that.

KIM: It's okay. I'm glad you all had such a nice time. I just hope I'll have a nice time one day.

GLORIA: It will happen. Just remember, do not arouse or awaken—

Kim grabs her ears and starts saying "La la la la la," running off so she doesn't have to hear it again. Randy and Sarah hug Ben and Gloria goodbye.

GLORIA: Goodbye, have a safe trip.

SARAH: You too.

BEN: Take care of that girl, Randy.

RANDY: I will, sir.

The couples exit. Will enters.

WILL: Hi.

SUZANNE: Hi.

WILL: Everybody's gone?

SUZANNE: Everyone but the King. It's checkout time, but I figured—

WILL: Yeah, I'd let it slide to.

Awkward pause.

WILL/SUZANNE: I need to tell you something.

WILL: You first.

SUZANNE: No, no, go ahead.

WILL: Ladies, first, I insist.

SUZANNE: I found the papers on this place.

Suzanne pulls out some documents.

SUZANNE: Looks like I can sign everything over to you with just a signature.

WILL: Why would you do that?

SUZANNE: Because I don't want it to myself.

WILL: You don't?

SUZANNE: It's all yours. Keep it, sell it... do whatever you want. It means nothing without you.

WILL: Suzanne, I don't want to stay here alone either.

SUZANNE: You don't?

WILL: I hate how we've become. I hate it... and I don't think it has to end this way.

SUZANNE: Really?

WILL: I used to be so crazy about you. Then somewhere along the way, I lost sight of that. We got so busy running this business... I forgot to remind myself how beautiful you are. How much you mean to me. We bought this place so we wouldn't forget, and even here, look at what's happened.

SUZANNE: We made a mess.

WILL: We can still clean it up, can't we?

Will and Suzanne embrace, kiss. The King and Beloved enter.

BELOVED: May the wine go straight to my lover, flowing gently over lips and teeth. I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me.

WILL: Come, my lover, let us go to the countryside, let us spend the night in the villages. Let us go early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded, if their blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom— there I will give you my love. The mandrakes send out their fragrance, and at our door is every delicacy, both new and old, that I have stored up for you, my lover.

BELOVED: If only you were to me like a brother, who was nursed at my mother's breasts! Then, if I found you outside, I would kiss you, and no one would despise me. I would lead you and bring you to my mother's house— she who has taught me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, the nectar of my pomegranates.

Kim enters.

SUZANNE: His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me. Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

KIM: Oh come on! Is everyone against me now?

Diana enters.

DIANA: Who is this coming up from the desert leaning on her lover?

SUZANNE: Under the apple tree I roused you; there your mother conceived you, there she who was in labor gave you birth.

Sarah and Randy enter.

SARAH: **6** Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.

Ben and Gloria enter. Corey enters.

GLORIA: Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.

DIANA: We have a young sister, and her breasts are not yet grown.

KIM: Metaphorically speaking!

DIANA: What shall we do for our sister for the day she is spoken for?

COREY: If she is a wall, we will build towers of silver on her. If she is a door, we will enclose her with panels of cedar.

SUZANNE: I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers. Thus I have become in his eyes like one bringing contentment.

BELOVED: Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon; he let out his vineyard to tenants. Each was to bring for its fruit a thousand shekels of silver. But my own vineyard is mine to give; the thousand shekels are for you, O Solomon, and two hundred are for those who tend its fruit.

KING: You who dwell in the gardens with friends in attendance, let me hear your voice!

SUZANNE: Come away, my lover, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the spice-laden mountains.

Music plays. Randy and Sarah exit. Then Ben and Gloria. Then the King and Beloved, followed by Diana. Will and Suzanne exit. Corey and Kim are left, awkwardly together. They turn to each other, shake hands, and exit opposite ways.

THE END...?