# Song of Solomon

Song of Solomon is a poem (or song) about the love between a shepherd boy and a young maiden, who could not be together because the girl had become one of the king’s concubines.

It was written by King Solomon around 1000 BCE.

**Tricky narration**

The Song of Solomon can be one of the most difficult Bible passages, as it’s a two-way conversation between a man and a woman told in song – so it’s not always clear exactly who is speaking. So to help the reader, we’ve looked at both the context and the grammar tenses for clues, and put what appears to be the woman’s words in **bold**, and those of her beloved shepherd boy in *italics*. We might not always have it right.

Also, it’s not always obvious when some terms are figurative or literal, so some translations are best-guesses.

### Song of Solomon

## Chapter 1

1The song of all songs by Solomon.

2[The Shulamite Girl says:]

 **‘May you kiss me with kisses from your mouth;**
 **For, [the feel] of your chest is better than wine.**
 3**And the smell of your scent is much better**
 **Than the odor of all the perfumes**
 **That have been poured in your name…**

 **‘And because of this, young women have loved you.**
 4**For, they’re the ones who drew me towards you,**
 **And towards the scent of your fragrance, we ran.**

 **‘Even though the king has carried me off**
 **Into his private apartments;**
 **I shout in joy and am glad over you,**
 **For I love your chest more than wine,**
 **And what I have for you is [pure] love.**

 5**‘O daughters of JeruSalem;**
 **I’m as pretty and tan**
 **As the tents in the Valley of Cedars,**
 **And as [King] Solomon’s leathers.**

 6**‘Yet, don’t bother to look, for I’m very dark,**
 **Because [I’ve worked hard] in the sun.**

 **‘For the sons of my mother quarreled with me**
 **And made me work hard in a vineyard…**
 **Yes, I tended to vines not my own.**

 7**‘So, tell me, O love by my life;**
 **Where is the place that you tend [your sheep],**
 **And where are you napping at noon?**

 **‘For I wish to be wrapped all around you**
 **There among your companions of flocks.’**

8[So the Shepherd Boy says:]

 *‘Well, if you don’t know, O my fair one,*
 *Follow at the heels of the flocks;*
 *For I tend my kids near the tents of the Shepherds.*

 9*‘As my horse from the chariots of PharaOh,*
 *Is how I [view] you, my dear one.*

 10*‘Your cheeks are as pretty as doves,*
 *And your neck is much like the pendant*
 11*That I’ll make for you out of gold accented with silver.’*

12[To which the Girl says:]

 **‘When the king came here to lie down with me,**
 **The oils I was wearing gave off their scent.**

 13**‘But for me, the man whom I truly love**
 **Is like a bundle of balsam,**
 **And between my breasts, I want him to stay.**

 14**‘For my love is a cluster of cypress…**
 **And like the vineyards of EnGedi.’**

15[And the Shepherd Boy says:]

 *‘Look… You’re so pretty, my dear one,*
 *And your eyes are like those of doves.’*

16[And the Girl replies:]

 **‘And look… You’re so handsome, my dearly-loved man;**
 **And beautiful will be our bed in the shade,**
 17**Where the beams of our house will be cedar,**
 **And our barns will be made out of cypress.’**

### Song of Solomon

## Chapter 2

 1**‘I am a flower of the fields…**
 **Yes, I’m a lily of the valley.’**

2[And the Boy says:]

 *‘Like a lily in the midst of thorn bushes,*
 *Is my dear one among many daughters.’*

3[And the Shulamite Girl replies:]

 **‘And as apples among other trees in the grove,**
 **Is my loved one amidst other sons.**
 **To rest in his shadow, is what I desire,**
 **For I’ve found his fruit to be sweet.**

 4**‘So, carry me away to the tavern,**
 **And when we get there, order me love!**
 5**Then rub me with fragrant oils,**
 **And pile apples upon me…**
 **For, I’ve been pierced through with love.**

 6**‘Now, his left hand is under my head,**
 **And with his right, he’s drawing me near.**

 7**‘O you daughters of JeruSalem;**
 **Swear by the powers and strengths of the fields**
 **That you won’t arise and awaken your love**
 **Until [the time] it’s desired.**

 8**‘O hear the voice of my dearly-loved man…**
 **{Look!} He’s coming, springing over the mountains,**
 **And leaping above all the hills.**
 9**For my dearly-loved man is [a fawn],**
 **And a stag among many hinds!**

 **‘{Look!} He’s standing outside of my window,**
 **And peeking at me through the shades.**

 10**‘The man whom I love is calling and says:**

 *‘Get up and come here, my dear one…*
 *Yes, my fair one and dove;*
 11*For look, the winter has passed,*
 *And the rains have poured down and ended.*

 12*‘Flowers have blossomed throughout the whole land,*
 *And the time for pruning’s arrived.*
 *You can hear the voices of doves calling out;*
 13*The fig trees are putting out buds;*
 *And you can smell the blossoms on grape vines.*

 *‘So, arise and come here, my dear one…*
 *Get up and come here, my dove!*
 14*Come, my dove, and stay near the rocks*
 *That are piled outside of the wall.*

 *‘Please let me see what you look like,*
 *And let me hear your voice once again*
 *For I love the way that you speak,*
 *And I [love to gaze at] your beauty.*
 15*So, grab hold of the foxes destroying the vines;*
 *For my grapevines are now in full bloom!’*

16[So the Shulamite Girl continues:]

 **‘Yes, my dearly-loved man is for me,**
 **And I’m his one and only.**
 **But he’s [outside] tending the lilies,**
 **Until a new day when the clouds will be gone.**

 17**‘O my dearly-loved man;**
 **Be like the fawn or a buck among hinds,**
 **And [stay nearby] in the mountains.’**

### Song of Solomon

## Chapter 3

 1**‘During the nights, there in my bed;**
 **Whole-souled, I searched for the one whom I love.**
 **But although I searched, I was unable to find him…**
 **I called to him, but he didn’t reply.**

 2**‘So I’ll get up and go through the city,**
 **Then I’ll search the markets and squares**
 **For the one whom I love with my whole soul.**

 **‘Well, I searched, but I couldn’t find him.**
 3**And then they found me… The ones keeping guard…**
 **Those who do rounds in the city.**
 **[And I asked], ‘Have you seen the love of my life?’**

 4**‘But, shortly after I passed them,**
 **I found the love of my life.**
 **I grabbed hold of him and didn’t let go,**
 **Then I took him to the house of my mother…**
 **To the bedroom of the one who conceived me.**

 5**‘O daughters of JeruSalem;**
 **Swear by the powers and strengths of the fields**
 **That you won’t arise and awaken your love**
 **Until [the time] it’s desired.’**

6[And the Shepherd Boy asks:]

 *‘Who is this woman who comes from the desert*
 *Like smoke arising from the odor*
 *Of myrrh, frankincense, and the powders of all the perfumers?’*

7[And the Girl says:]

 **‘{Look!} There’s King Solomon’s couch**
 **With 60 mighty men standing [guard] ‘round it**
 **From among all of IsraEl’s great ones.**

 8**‘Each one is holding his broadsword,**
 **And in ways of war, they all have been trained.**
 **They wear their swords on their hips,**
 **[As they keep watch] throughout the night.**

 9**‘King Solomon has a carriage made from Lebanon’s cedars,**
 10**Which has columns of silver, couches of gold,**
 **And purple carpets that line all its steps…**
 **Gifts of love from JeruSalem’s daughters.**

 11**‘So, come and behold, O daughters of Zion…**
 **See Solomon and the garland he got from his mother**
 **On the day that he took me,**
 **And when his heart was so filled with joy!’**

### Song of Solomon

## Chapter 4

1[And the Shepherd Boy says:]

 *‘{Look!} You’re so pretty my dear one…*
 *See how pretty you are!*
 *Your eyes look like doves inside of your veil;*
 *Your hair is as [luxuriant as] herds of GileAd’s goats.*

 2*‘Your teeth [are as white] as freshly-sheared sheep*
 *After they’ve come from the bath…*
 *All of whom have born twins,*
 *And none are childless among them.*

 3*‘Your lips are like scarlet ribbons,*
 *And the way that you talk is so pretty.*
 *Your cheeks, when they’re outside your veil,*
 *Are red like pomegranate skins.*

 4*‘Your neck is like the tower of David*
 *(The one which was built for protection),*
 *In which hangs the shields of a thousand,*
 *As well as the arrows of his mighty.*
 5*And your breasts are as [charming as] twin fawns,*
 *Which are feeding there among the lilies.*

 6*‘But until a new day arrives,*
 *When all the shadows are gone,*
 *I’ll go to the mountain of myrrh,*
 *And wait for you at the frankincense hill.*

 7*‘For, entirely lovely is my dear one…*
 *Yes, she is totally perfect.*

 8*‘So, come from Lebanon, my bride…*
 *From Lebanon, please come here to me!*
 *Come to me through the Archway of Trust…*
 *From the peaks of Shinar and HerMon…*
 *From the mountains of leopards and lions.*

 9*‘For, you’ve captured my heart,*
 *O my sister and bride…*
 *You’ve captured my heart with your eyes*
 *And your neck of garlands [and flowers].*

 10*‘Pretty are both your breasts,*
 *O my sister and bride.*
 *They’re better than the finest of wines,*
 *And the scent of your clothes exceeds all perfumes.*

 11*‘Your lips are like honey as it drips from the comb…*
 *Honey and milk are under your tongue,*
 *And like frankincense, is the smell of your clothes.*

 12*‘But you’re locked in a garden, my sister and bride…*
 *Like a well that’s been covered and sealed.*

 13*‘All the messages that you’ve sent*
 *Are like pomegranate gardens to me…*
 *They’re like the fruit from the trees…*
 *They’re like the scent of cypress and nard…*

 14*‘Yes, cypress, nard, calamus and saffron…*
 *The smell of cinnamon and Lebanon's cedars,*
 *Along with aloes and the best of perfumes.*

 15*‘They’re like life-giving wells in a garden,*
 *And the springs of life-saving waters,*
 *Which from Lebanon, still pour down to us.*

 16*‘So wake up, O north wind… Come now!*
 *And south wind, breathe life to [you], my garden…*
 *Come and let its scents flow!’*

### Song of Solomon

## Chapter 5

1[To which the Shulamite Girl replies:]

 **‘May the man whom I love enter his garden,**
 **And may he eat the fruit from its trees!’**

[So the Shepherd Boy says:]

 *‘Yes, I’ll go to my garden, my sister and bride,*
 *And I’ll gather my harvest of spices and myrrh.*
 *For I’ve eaten my bread and its honey,*
 *And I’ve drunk its milk and its wine.’*

[And the Girl says:]

 **‘Please eat, my dear one, and drink…**
 **Let’s both get drunk, my dearly-loved man!**
 2**Although I [want to] sleep, my heart tells me no;**
 **For my loved one knocked on my door, then he said:**

 *‘Open to me, O my sister…*
 *Yes open, my dear one… My perfect dove.*
 *For my head is covered with dew,*
 *And my curls [are wet] with the mist of the night.*

 3*‘I've removed all of my underclothes…*
 *So now, must I put them back on?*
 *I’ve also washed off my feet…*
 *Must I run and get them dirty again?’*

 4**‘Then my dearly-loved man stuck his hand through [my door],**
 **And he was aroused [by the touch of my skin].**
 5**So I got up and opened to him,**
 **As my hands were dripping with myrrh…**
 **My fingers dripped with myrrh on the lock.**
 6**But, when I opened for the one whom I love;**
 **The man whom I love... Wasn’t there...**

 **‘With my whole soul, I yearned for his voice;**
 **So I searched, but I couldn’t find him…**
 **I called for him, but he couldn’t hear me.**

 7**‘Then they found me (the guards who make rounds through the town)…**
 **They struck me and hurt me, and took off my wrap**
 **(Those who keep watch at the walls).**

 8**‘So, O JeruSalem’s daughters;**
 **Swear by the powers and strengths of the fields…**
 **Please tell me if you've seen my dearly-loved man,**
 **For, I’ve been pierced through by love!’**

9[And the daughters of Jerusalem ask:]

 ‘Who is this man whom you love above all,
 O prettiest one among women?
 Who’s this one whom you so dearly love
 That you’ve bound us with such an oath?’

10[To which she replies:]

 **‘My man is impressive and virile…**
 **He's the choicest and my one and only...**

 11**‘His head is like gold from Kephas;**
 **His curls are flowing like fir trees,**
 **And they’re as black as a crow.**

 12**‘His eyes are like doves near deep pools…**
 **As though bathed in milk over water.**

 13**‘His mouth is like a bowl filled with spice,**
 **Which is set out to give a fresh smell.**

 **‘His lips are also like lilies,**
 **Dripping with full-bodied myrrh...**

 14**‘And his hands are like gold from Tharsis and gems.**

 **‘His belly is a tablet of ivory,**
 **Upon which is mounted a sapphire.**

 15**‘His legs are like columns of marble,**
 **Resting on bases of gold.**

 **‘He looks like the finest of Lebanon's cedars,**
 16**And his [voice] is desirable and sweet.**

 **‘O daughters of JeruSalem;**
 **He’s my dearest and the man whom I love!’**

### Song of Solomon

## Chapter 6

1[So the daughters ask her:]

 ‘O prettiest one among women;
 Where has he wandered… Yes, where has he gone,
 So we can go search on your behalf?’

2[And the Shulamite Girl replies:]

 **‘My loved one has gone to his garden**
 **To gather his bowls filled with spices.**
 **He’s gone to tend to his garden,**
 **And to gather his lilies.**

 3**‘I belong to my dearly-loved man,**
 **And my dearly-loved man is [just] mine…**
 **This one who’s tending his lilies.’**

4[The Shepherd boy says:]

 *‘You’re so pretty, my dear one…*
 *As pleasing [to me] as JeruSalem!*
 *But you’re also as disturbing*
 *As [men] preparing for war.*
 5*So, turn your eyes from before me,*
 *Because they excite me too much!*

 *‘For your hair is like that of GileAd’s goats,*
 6*And your teeth [are as white] as freshly-sheared sheep*
 *That have just come from the bath,*
 *All of which have born twins,*
 *And none are childless among them.*

 *‘Your lips are like scarlet ribbons,*
 *And the way that you talk is so pretty.*
 7*Your cheeks that show through your veil,*
 *Are as red as pomegranate skins.*

 8*‘Yet, there are now 60 queens,*
 *And 80 concubines more,*
 *As well as unnumbered young women…*
 9*And one of them is my perfect dove!*

 *‘She’s the only daughter of her mother…*
 *The most-loved one of the mother who gave birth.*
 *The daughters and queens call her blest,*
 *And the concubines all [sing] her praises.*

 10*‘Who is this one who looks like the dawn*
 *And is as fair as the moon…*
 *The chosen one of the sun,*
 *Who's as disturbing as men preparing for war?’*

 11*‘To the grove of walnuts, I traveled…*
 *I went down to gaze on their fruits,*
 *Which are there by the stream in the valley.*
 *I went there to see if grapevines had flowered,*
 *And to view the pomegranate blossoms.*
 12*For my soul had made me like the chariots of nobles.*

 13*‘Please return, O Shulamite girl!*
 *Return, return, for I’m searching for you!*
 *How would you know it’s the Shulamite girl?*
 *She arrives like an army in the camp.’*

### Song of Solomon

## Chapter 7

 1*‘How pretty are your feet in your sandals,*
 *O you daughter of nobles.*
 *Your thighs are shaped like fine pendants…*
 *The works of the hands of a craftsman.*

 2*‘Your navel is like a finely-shaped bowl,*
 *Not lacking a mixture of wines.*
 *Your belly is like a mound of best grain,*
 *That’s wrapped within fields of lilies.*

 3*‘Your breasts are as [charming as] two young fawns…*
 *A pair of twins of the doe.*
 4*Your neck is [like] a tower of ivory,*
 *And your eyes are as [deep as] HeshBon’s lakes*
 *(Those by the Gates of Many Daughters).*

 *‘As [strong as] Lebanon’s Tower, is your nose…*
 *The one overlooking Damascus.*
 5*Your head [has the beauty of] CarMel,*
 *And its braids are like the purple cloth*
 *In which the king’s wrapped as he passes.*

 6*‘How beautiful and delicious you are, O my love,*
 *In the luxurious things you possess.*
 7*In greatness, you’re much like a palm tree,*
 *And your breasts are as [desirable as] clusters of grapes.*

 8*‘So I said that I’d climb up that ‘palm tree,’*
 *And to its top, I’d cling.*
 *For your breasts are as [desirable as] clusters of grapes on the vine;*
 *The scent from your breath is [sweet] like apples;*
 9*And [the taste] of your [mouth] is like the finest wines.’*

[And the Shulamite Girl says:]

 **‘I’m going to my dearly-loved man straight away,**
 **For [I need him close] to my lips and my teeth.**
 10**I’ll turn to the man whom I love,**
 **And he will then turn towards me.**

 11**‘Come, O man whom I love;**
 **We’ll run to the fields and lodge in the little villages!**
 12**We’ll get up early [and go into] the vineyards,**
 **To see if the grapevines have bloomed;**
 **To see if the flowers have blossomed;**
 **To see if the pomegranates have budded;**
 **And there, I’ll give you my breasts.And there, I’ll give you my breasts.<sup class="difference">[LXX]**

 13**‘The mandrakes have given their odor,**
 **And new and old fruit trees are outside our doors.**
 **O man whom I love; I’ve saved them for you!’**

### Song of Solomon

## Chapter 8

1[And the Shulamite Girl says:]

 **‘O man whom I love,**
 **Whom I’d grant to nurse at my mother’s breasts;**
 **If I found you outside, I’d kiss you,**
 **And let none ever be disrespectful.**

 2**‘Yes, I’d come there and take you…**
 **I’d bring you to the house of my mother,**
 **And into the room where I was conceived,**
 **Where I’d allow you to drink the spiced wine**
 **That comes from my pomegranate nectar.**

 3**‘O… His left hand is under my head,**
 **And with his right hand, he’s holding me close.**

 4**‘O daughters of JeruSalem;**
 **Swear by the powers and strengths of the fields**
 **That you won’t arise and awaken your love**
 **Until [the time] it's desired.’**

5[And the daughters of Jerusalem ask:]

 ‘Who is this who ascends from the desert,
 Hanging onto the man whom she loves?’

[And the Shepherd Boy says:]

 *‘From under apple trees, I awoke you,*
 *And there was your mother beside you…*
 *The one who through pain, gave you birth.*

 6*‘Please set me as a seal on your heart,*
 *And as a seal on your arm!*
 *For, as strong as death is [my] love for you,*
 *And [my] zeal is as hard as the grave.*

 *‘It sparks with the fire of [love’s] flames,*
 7*Which can't be extinguished with water,*
 *Nor can the rivers engulf it.*
 *But, should a man give all he owns for his love,*
 *[Most] others would think him [a fool].*

 8*‘Our sister is [young], without breasts;*
 *So, what should we do on the day she's engaged?*
 9*If she should be like a wall,*
 *We’d build a silver parapet around her.*
 *But, if she should be like a door,*
 *With cedar planks, we would board her up.’*

10[And the Shulamite Girl says:]

 **‘I’m a ‘wall,’ and my breasts are like towers;**
 **So, in their eyes, I’m [safe and] at peace.**

 11**‘[King] Solomon owned a vineyard in BaAl HerMon,**
 **He entrusted it to others to maintain it.**
 **Every man had to pay 1,000 silver pieces for its fruit.**

 12**‘Well, my ‘vineyard’ is before me...**
 **And to Solomon, you must pay your thousands,**
 **And 200 more to those tending his fruit...**

 13**‘O you who now sits in the garden!**

 **‘My companions have noticed your voice,**
 **And the things that you’ve said to me!**

 **‘So, man whom I love, you must now run away!**
 **[Escape] like the doe or young stag,**
 **Upon the scented mountains!’**