



The Shulammitte Calls for the Shepherd to Rescue Her; Taken to Solomon's Tent; Her Complexion Causes Self-Deprecation but the Virgins Continue to Schmooze

SOS 1:4a - [SW] "Draw me!"

- This is the Qal imperative of the verb:

מִשַׁחַח <i>mashach</i> -	To draw off; to drag. Used of pulling someone out of a location; to pick out and retrieve something.
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- Here the Shulammitte beckons to her Shepherd Lover to spirit her away from a location; to retrieve her from the clutches of Solomon.
- Notice once more that her right man is always in her thoughts. She is depending upon him to protect her from this threat. She does not want to be forced into doing something that would destroy her relationship with the Shepherd.
- As the Shulammitte is occupied with her Shepherd Lover in a moment of crisis so should the believer be occupied with Christ so that when in a crisis situation he can call upon the Lord for deliverance instead of submitting to the challenge.
- We will translate her imperative, "Pull me out of here and take me away!" To this the coterie of virgins respond:

SOS 1:4b - [DJ] "We will quickly run after you."

- The Daughters counter by telling the Shulammitte that if she were to leave with her Shepherd Lover they would follow her.
- The reality is that the Daughters are Solomon's pimps and their assignment is to lure the Shulammitte into his harem. If she is rescued by her Shepherd Lover then they assert they will follow them.

SOS 1:4c - [SW] "The king has brought me into his chambers."

- The mission is to bring the Shulammitte into Solomon's tent. The word is the plural of חֶתֶר *hether* and refers to any room or compartment that affords privacy.
- It can refer to the king's bedroom complex in the palace in Jerusalem or his traveling quarters when on a road trip. We find the latter in this passage:

Pope, Marvin H. *Song of Songs*. (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1977), 303:

Chambers. Whether applied to a tent or to a more substantial structure, *hether* refers to the *interior domus* [the intimate or secret part of a dwelling]. ... of the tent ... the section closed off with a curtain for privacy.

- The Daughters have accomplished what the Shulammitte did not count on. Apparently they had escorts who ushered her to Solomon's headquarters for her appointment in his traveling boudoir.
- The Daughters continue their propaganda designed to appeal to the Shulammitte's approbation lust as they arrive at the tent:

SOS 1:4d - [DJ] "We will rejoice in you and be glad, we will remember your love more than wine. The upright love you."

- Apparently women of the ninth century B.C. carried on then as many do now. They got to talking and they couldn't shut up. The Daughters are really pouring it on as they continue to try and make the sale.



2. The message in this last volley is that the virgins will rejoice over having the Shulammitte as one of their queens and they further contend they look forward to serving her.
3. This is the rhetorical veil designed to advance while concealing their hidden agenda: they hope they will receive approbation from Solomon if they are successful in recruiting the Shulammitte.

SOS 1:4 - [SW] “Pull me out of here and take me away!”

[DJ] “We will quickly run after you.”

[SW] “The king has brought me into the secret chamber of his tent.”

[DJ] “We will rejoice in you and be glad, we will remember your love more than wine. The upright love you.”

SOS 1:5a - [SW] “I am black.”

1. The Shulammitte is not of African descent. She is a Jew. The comment here has reference to the fact that her skin has been darkened by the sun.
2. Women of this culture were expected to do manual labor. In her father’s absence her brothers manage the family vineyard and among her several duties is the task of flushing foxes from the vines.
3. This outdoor work had resulted in her acquiring a dark complexion which at the time was not considered becoming and thus not attractive to men.
4. The Shulammitte is saying to the virgins that she will not be looked upon by Solomon as beautiful. However, the Daughters disagree:

SOS 1:5b - [DJ] “But beautiful!”

SOS 1:5c - [SW] “O Daughters of Jerusalem, black like the tents of Kedar” [made of black goats’ hair].

1. The Hebrew word for “tents” is the plural of אהל *’ohel* which is a derivative of אהל *’ahal* “to be clear”, hence *’ohel*, “to be conspicuous from a distance.”

Orr, James (gen. ed.). *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 4:2947:

In the great stretches of uncultivated lands in the interior of Arabia, it is an easy matter to espy an encampment of roving Bedouin. The peaks of their black goats’ hair tents stand out in contrast against the lighter colors of the soil.

2. The Shulammitte’s comment is self-deprecation. Not only is her skin darkened by the sun and thus unlovely, she compares it to the black goats’-hair tents of the Kedarites which further degrades her appearance.

Orr, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 3:1790:

KEDAR *kē' dar* (קֶדָר *qethar*). Second in the order of the sons of Ishmael. Isaiah introduces this tribe in company with Nebaioth *ne-bä' yoth* [firstborn of Ishmael] and both are represented as owners of flocks (Isaiah 60:7). In (Song of Solomon 1:5) where the tents are made symbolic of dark beauty, the word *qethar* (“to be black”) may have been in the writer’s mind.

It is through Kedar that Muslim genealogists trace the descent of Mohammad from Ishmael.

3. This is self-insult: “I am sunburned black. In fact, I’m as black as the black on those black Kedarites’ tents.” The Daughters object and counter with a complementary comparison:

SOS 1:5d - [DJ] “No, like the curtains of Solomon.”

1. Solomon’s tent has been set and is enclosed by white draperies.



SOS 1:5 - [SW] "I am black."

[DJ] "But beautiful!"

[SW] "O Daughters of Jerusalem; black like the tents of Kedar."

[DJ] "No, like the curtains of Solomon."

2. Thus the Shulammitte has been escorted down to Solomon's tent but she is concerned because she is not properly groomed to meet the king of Israel.