The Romance of the Ages

He: It’s a strange and timeless story.

She: A love story.

He: The story of Hosea and his wife.

She: And her name?

He: The story is a whole lot better if you don’t have to say the name.

She: But her name is important.

He: I know but—

She: Her name was Gomer.

He: If there is a lesson to be learned from this story, it’s don’t name your daughter “Gomer.”

She: No. There is a much greater lesson to be learned. Gomer was a prostitute.

He: Hosea was a preacher.

She: Not exactly the kind of match that you’d find on *The Bachelor*.

He: But reality television wasn’t around. God was the matchmaker.

She: And Hosea loved Gomer.

He: Have you seen my wife, Gomer? *(speaking to an unseen person)* Where?

She: And he would search, but he never found her—until he looked in the red-light district of the Northern Kingdom. Despite her lying—

He: despite her adultery—

Both: Hosea loved Gomer.

She: Despite her cruelty—

He: despite her sin—

Both: Hosea loved Gomer.

She: Why don't you just leave me alone? I'm not good enough for you. I can't live my life as a prophet's wife. Stop rescuing me, Hosea!

He: I love you.

She: Listen to me! I don't care. You pull me out of bars, and I'm going to return to them sooner or later. Love isn't strong enough to hold me. I'm not the woman you dreamed I could be. Am I?

He: No. Not now.

She: You're a dreamer.

He: You're my wife.

She: I'm not your wife! I quit. I give up! Can't you hear me?

He: I hear you, but—

She: Then leave—

He: I love—

She: me alone!

He: you. I love you!

She: Do you have any pride! Do you have any self-respect?

He: I have love!

She: That wasn’t the question. You’re ruining my business! Your love is humiliating.

He: I know it is. But it is also strong.

She: Hosea was a romantic in the purest form. Every fiber of his being was love. Every breath, every thought, every moment was consumed by a God-given love for his wife. Like a mad man to the world, he kept searching for this unrequited love.

He: No one—

She: not Shakespeare,

He: Browning,

She: or McCartney and Lennon

He: could write a song like Hosea lived.

She: This romance was a nightmare.

Both: Hosea was a failure. Hosea loved Gomer.

He: At the apex of this romantic catastrophe we find Hosea once again searching the inner city for his wife. And off in the distance he sees her. Captured by the pimps of that age who had her on the auction block. She was an ugly sight.

She: Bruised,

He: beaten,

She: naked,

He: humiliated,

She: destroyed—

He: she had nothing.

She: Hosea went back to their house and gathered all his

possessions. His money, his food, everything of value.

He: And as the bidding began, he ran to the auction block. And the auctioneer began—

She: Who'll give me five shekels for this woman.

He: Five!

She: Do I hear seven? Seven it is! Do I hear 10?

He: Ten!

She: Ten. Do I hear twelve? Twelve it is! Do I hear fifteen? Fifteen it is! Fifteen . . . Going once! Going twice . . .

He: I'll give everything I have!

Both: Silence . . .

She: The crowd parted as Hosea gave his money and every ounce of food he had. He covered her trembling, humiliated body. He picked her up, this beaten woman who had been caged and chained like an animal. He picked her up and carried her home.

He: Paid in full.

She: A relentless romantic.

He: Solid as a rock.

She: God-like.

He: With a God kind of love.

She: Unheard of before this time.

He: Before the time when God looked down upon the auction block of the cosmos and saw you and me.

She: An ugly sight.

He: Bruised,

She: beaten,

He: naked,

She: humiliated,

He: destroyed.

Both: Chained and captured like an animal.

She: We had nothing.

He: And before the bidding began,

She: the earth quaked as God shouted,

He: “I’ll give everything I have!”

She: And the hammer fell

He: and ransom was laid down.

Both: Paid in full!

She: The romance of the ages!

He: The romantic—

She: Who gave birth to other romantics—

He: who loved regardless of circumstance—

She: despite lying,

He: despite adultery,

She: despite cruelty,

He: despite sin.

She: Hosea so loved.

He: God so loved.

She: Wives,

He: husbands,

She: you are invited to partake in the romance of the ages,

He: to enter into the very center of Christ’s love.

She: Totally loved.

He: Totally forgiven.

She: Totally freed to love each other

He: as Christ loved us.

Both: The romance of the ages.

She: God showed how much He loved us by sending His only Son into this wicked world to bring to us eternal life through His death.

He: In this act we see what real love is.

She: Dear friends, since God loved us as much as that, we surely ought to love each other too.

He: Therefore—

Both: go and love likewise.

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