

THE SYMBOLIC RING

As the bright sun bathed the room with light, Solomon placed a call to his girlfriend. He waited eagerly for her voice as the hands on the clock edged forward, then spoke.

“Hello, Joy? My love. It’s me. Can we meet for dinner tonight?” he wondered. “I have something special in mind.”

Intrigued by the mystery, Joy readily accepted.

After completing the call, Solomon donned his new scarlet suit, put on his new shoes, then left in his new car. The vehicle appeared full of energy and promise, its bright red exterior shining in the hot sun. He was proud of the speed at which it moved and its manoeuverability.

It was a warm spring day, full of energy and promise – a day that made one think of the sizzling summer ahead, to be filled with heat and joy, ... especially joy.

He drove along Anticipation Road until he reached Joy’s magnificent white home. It was a tall attractive, well-built house, with a pleasing shape. The front yard with its large porch and its manicured lawn caught the eye of many a passerby and its windows, like eyes, seemed to beckon invitingly. Solomon had yet to enter the house, but he longed for the day he would discover its internal magnificence.

He found Joy waiting in the driveway. She was beside herself. She wore a white dress with white gloves and white shoes. There was also a loose white ribbon in her hair. It seemed to be struggling to control the beautiful cascading hair that longed to break free.

Solomon expressed an interest in a restaurant called Togethers, along Union Boulevard. As Joy did not object he led her, hand in hand, to the car.

At the restaurant, the waiter showed the couple to an intimate round table, with a beautiful candle in the centre.

As Solomon declared his passion for Joy, hot buttered rolls were served. Joy refused to indulge however, claiming they would spoil her appetite for the main course. Solomon, unconcerned with that, ate furiously.

During the meal, with the candle flame soaring higher, he continued to assert his love. Finally as hot coffee was served, he burst out, "Joy, can't you see that I love you?!"

"Yes, I can," she replied, squeezing lemon into her coffee then sipping her drink quietly.

He reached across the table to take her hand.

"I have something special for you," he began. From his pocket, he withdrew a small golden box, placing it in front of her beside the bright candle. The box itself seemed to glisten and sparkle. He took her hand once more as she gazed with admiration at the diamond inside. The lustre of the ring was reflected in their eyes.

"Oh, Solomon! It's beautiful!" she cried.

The candle's flame soared brightly as they gazed into each others' eyes.

"I had no idea!" she exclaimed.

His eyes glistened and sparkled with anticipation.

"Will you marry me?" he asked as he pushed their dishes together and tightly clasped her hand.

"Oh! I don't know," she gasped, twisting her fingers, dropping her spoon and spilling her coffee. Finally, she pushed his arms away and separated the dishes. "No, I can't! It's too sudden!"

The candle between them flickered and died. The room darkened and his eyes no longer glistened and sparkled.

Solomon rose to leave, pushing himself away from the table. He turned his back on the girl and, with a long face, dragged himself along the corridor leading outside.

He went out into the rain with dampened spirits. The sun had gone down and it was now dark and very cool. His new car had lost its polished image and his suit was soiled with food stains. Amid a blanket of clouds, a pale moon climbed into the gray sky with sad steps and a wan face. Traffic slowed to a crawl and pedestrians skulked along the street, their heads bent low facing the chilly wind. He was without joy.

As he shuffled toward his car, Solomon suddenly heard a cry behind him.

“Solomon. Wait!”

The rain stopped.

He turned to see Joy running toward him.

“Yes, I will marry you!” she burst out, removing her white gloves for a passionate embrace. The white ribbon in her hair loosened and fell to the ground as her long beautiful hair broke free.

Overhead, the clouds cleared revealing a stunning moonlit sky. Traffic resumed its frantic pace (as the traffic lights changed) and pedestrians bustled across the streets. Solomon and Joy kissed under the blaze of a bright street lamp, then Joy invited him back to her house to celebrate.

Inside the restaurant, the waiter gathered their plates together and relit the candle.