

FACES OF LOVE
Copyright 2013, Paul Spite
For one time use by churches, all other rights reserved

... A **pianist** or sound system softly plays love songs as people are seated for the dinner theatre. A simple set is established in one corner of the room. It should be visible from all tables. After drinks are served to all tables, the music plays softer and softer as lights fade away. As the lights go down, the **narrator** casually takes his place on a stool. He will be reminiscing throughout the evening. As the current love song is brought to an end, silence is allowed to build for a few seconds. This would be when a **pianist** would quietly leave the bench.

Introduction: (Quietly) Ladies and gentlemen! I can truly tell you tonight. Love has many faces It fulfills and thrills, it destroys and graces .. our lives. For the sake of love, wars have been fought, miracles wrought, and hearts broken. Because of love, songs are sung, bells rung, and promises spoken. No other emotion has had such an impact on mankind. None is so wondrous, and yet so unkind. Love has so many faces. You know them as I do. Together, let's look at a few.

... Here the lights slowly come up to reveal the **Narrator**. He turns to face the audience.

Narrator: I remember my first love like it was yesterday. I was in line at the drinking fountain. She was ahead of me, taking her time. When I suggested she move, she turned and flicked water in my face. And smiled... My whole world changed. She walked away laughing. I wasn't. I was noticing, for the first time, the shape of a woman in motion. I went to visit her brother the next day. I can't believe I forgot he wasn't home. Coincidentally, she was. We talked outside, and she was cold, so I gave her my coat. My first damsel in distress. The first one to my knowledge I'd ever impressed. ... I remember the first time she kissed me. Fireworks without a permit! But that was nothing compared to when she said she loved me. ... I whispered back, "I love you too!" ... and I knew something of what it must mean ... to be a man. The words to songs I had heard for years, suddenly became significant.

The music starts up in the background and slowly fades in...

You come on like a dream, peaches and cream
Lips like strawberry wine
You're sixteen, you're beautiful and you're mine
You're all ribbons and curls, ooh what a girl.
Eyes that sparkle and shine
You're sixteen, you're beautiful and you're mine
You're my baby, you're my pet. We fell in love on the night we met
You touched my hand, my heart went pop
Ooh, when we kissed I could not stop
You walked out of my dreams and into my arms
Now you're my angel divine
You're sixteen, you're beautiful and you're mine
You're my baby, you're my pet
We fell in love on the night we met
You touched my hand, my heart went pop
Ooh, when we kissed I could not stop
You walked out of my dreams, and into my car
Now you're my angel divine
You're sixteen, you're beautiful, and you're mine

... The music fades and dies As the **narrator** continues speaking, a **couple** strolls in, hand in hand, into a park scene where a bench sits....

Narrator: Of course, there's a difference in feeling like you're in love. And having any idea how to express it. It was my first try at reading a lady's mind. I'm still not sure, after all these years, I've gotten any better.

.... *The light comes up on the park scene and fades on the **Narrator**. The young **couple** are hand in hand. She's rather expectant. He has no idea what he's supposed to do. He is sure he's supposed to do something. Quite nervous. he looks around.*

Boy: Uh! This is really some park, isn't it?

Girl: *(Looks around)* Yeah, some park! *(An awkward silence follows)*

Boy: *(Looks up)* Boy, that's some moon up there!

Girl: *(Looks up, looks at the **boy** with an eyebrow raised)* Yeah! That sure is. Some moon, all right!

Boy: *(Knows he's not doing well)* Um, that's some bench there. Let's sit down.

Girl: *(Hesitant, obviously unimpressed, nonetheless sits down with him)* Yep, some bench! *(Another awkward silence. The boy is casting for something to say)*

Boy: *(Again looks up, and puts his arm on back of the bench while doing so)* Some night!

Girl: *(Totally sarcastic and tense)* Some night, all right!

Boy: *(Rubs hand on the back of the bench, puzzled, and leans in front of **girl** to look at hand. This happens to almost put her in his embrace. Still looking at his hand)* Some dew!

Girl: *(Registers shock, leaps up from bench, slaps him and sends him rolling)* Well! I ... don't!!!

... ***Girl** runs off stage as boy sits stunned. The lights go back down and come up on **Narrator**. As **Narrator** speaks, **Boy** makes his way off stage....*

Narrator: Took me a while to figure out what happened there. Hope you were quicker.... She taught me a lot about protocol and decorum. And she taught me a lot about love.I remember another song, entitled, "And They Call It Puppy Love", but it wasn't. It's still as real to me now as it was then. The years have taken away none of my memories... For over a year, she was the sun my world revolved around... How were we to know the yearnings we felt had no substance to grow in? And that time and place were our enemies? I left home young. To go away to college. And she became afraid. I failed to convince either her or myself. That the changes in my life would not exclude her. Angry words were spoken, never to be recalled. And I lost her..... I stood back, considering whether it was truly better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all. Music again gave me part of an answer.

Music begins to play softly and gradually increases to full volume. Servers come in with salads and drinks.

What do you get when you fall in love?
A guy with a pin to burst your bubble
That's what you get for all your trouble
I'll never fall in love again
I'll never fall in love again
What do you get when you kiss a guy
You get enough germs to catch pneumonia
After you do, he'll never phone ya
I'll never fall in love again
I'll never fall in love again

Don't tell me what it's all about
'cause I've been there and I'm glad I'm out
Out of those chains those chains that bind you
That is why I'm here to remind you
What do you get when you fall in love?
You only get lies and pain and sorrow
So for at least until tomorrow
I'll never fall in love again
I'll never fall in love again

Narrator freezes and holds still while serving is completed and drinks refilled. As the majority of servers clear the floor, he waits for relative silence. Then the Narrator continues....

Narrator: *(As music fades away)* You've probably have noticed. Music means a lot to me. It does to us all. It's the language of love. And the way we feel about love is reflected in the songs we internalize. They say, what we would sing, if we only had the nerve to sing. ... I remember Barry Manilow's song, "Mandy" was playing another time I fell in love. We were at the top of a snow tubing run, just Lisa and I. Cold air was biting at my face. I hardly noticed. She shared my tube with me, my arms were around her, my face in her hair, and the night turned to magic. Suddenly, there was no reason to go anywhere. Especially when anywhere was downhill from there. That time, when she said she loved me, I thought it over before I replied. I was learning, you see. ...It was a short romance. I was just trying to figure out what living for God might mean. I did figure out. What I wanted on my dates might not amuse my new master.

... This skit opens with a boy and girl sitting in two chairs (the front seat of a car). They are fairly well lit. Behind them is sitting a hooded and cloaked Jesus in pretty dim light. As the skit opens, the boy is "driving" with his left hand. His right is folded up on the back of the nonexistent seat. He puts both hands on the nonexistent wheel, applies the nonexistent brake, and brings the nonexistent car to a stop.

Girl: *(Looks toward boy after looking out the window side)* So! What'd you think of the youth pastor's little talk tonight?

Boy: What about it? Which part?

Girl: That part about if Jesus is really in us, will he enjoy what we do? As much as we do?

Boy: I think it's taking things a little too far. I mean, if Jesus didn't like what we're doing, I'm sure he'd just tell us.

Girl: (*Shrugs*) I suppose so!

Boy: For example! The six inch separation rule. You really think that something like this would bother a God? Who created us male and female? (*As he says the last part, he leans toward the girl, puts his arm around her. He is preparing to kiss her when he realizes someone is in the back seat. Jesus has lowered the cloak hood and is visible. The boy freezes in place for a second*)

Boy: (*Terrified*) What? Who are you? What do you want?

Jesus: Have I been so long with you? And you still don't know me?

Boy: (*After a long pause*) You've got to be kidding! You can't be Jesus! Can you?

... *Jesus nods. The boy immediately removes his arm from around the girl's shoulder. He turns to face the front of the car, totally freaked out.*

Girl: (*Stares at the boy like he's crazy*) What's wrong with you? Who were you talking to?

Boy: (*Jerks his thumb toward the back seat*) Je... Jes...

Girl: What?

Boy: Jesus. He's here!

Girl: Of course he is.

Boy: No! He's here! In the back seat! Look!

Girl: (*Turns and looks behind her. By this time, Jesus has raised the hood to cover his face. She cannot see him*) Okkaaay! I don't believe this.

Boy: (*Jerks his head around. He can no longer see Jesus either. He shakes his head in bewilderment*) I guess that message got to me. More than I thought. (*Waits a moment*) Well, I know just the thing to distract me. Want to go to the house. Got a new computer game. Called "Dukem, nukem, and cookem" It's got twenty-seven levels of firepower. Including total world annihilation. It's awesome!

Girl: No thanks. Really don't like those violent games. Besides? (*She laughs*) What would your friend in the back seat say?

The boy also laughs and casually looks up, as if in a rear view mirror. In the back seat. Jesus has again removed his hood and is "visible" again. The boy jumps, visibly startled.

Jesus: Actually? I don't care for them either!

Boy: *(Looks away, and rubs his eyes. As he does, **Jesus** puts the hood back on. The **boy** looks again toward the mirror location and shakes his head. He cannot see any one) Wow! I'm starting to lose it. My nerves must be shot. Maybe some music will help..*

... As he says this, he reaches to the location a radio would be. He turns a nonexistent knob. When he does this, a rap song with non-objectionable words begins to blast out.

Girl: You've got me paranoid now. You think Jesus would care for this music?

Boy: *(Looks again into the mirror. **Jesus** is once again unhooded, is wincing, and has put hands over his ears. The boy reaches out, turns the knob again, and the radio falls silent. He sighs deeply) Guess he doesn't!*

Girl: Listen, Honey! Let's try this.

*She reaches to the "radio", punches some "preset" button, then turns the knob. The sound of a worship chorus comes drifting out. **Both** lean back in their seats...*

Girl: Don't you think this is better? For us? For Jesus?

Boy: *(Somewhat sarcastic) Hey! Why wonder? (Turns in seat and addresses **Jesus** directly) This okay with you? (The **girl** has also turned, has seen **Jesus**, and is frozen in disbelief)*

Jesus: Actually, I love it. Thank you! And Son? Any time you really want to know what pleases me? Just ask. I'll be sure to let you know. Thank you both for asking. Not many do!

*.... With this, Jesus leans back in his seat, pulls the hood up again over his face. The lights fade away as he does so..... They come back up on the **Narrator**....*

Narrator: It was a time of change. All of us seeking who we were really going to be. One thing changed quickly. Our relationships with one another. That girl and I quickly learned. Besides our attraction to one another, our worlds had nothing in common. When she told me she'd like to just go back to being friends, I never looked back. I'd been prepared for it all along.... That was also about the time I began to drift away from God. I'd sit back and watch the difference between what was said and lived, both in church and in love. I wanted no more risk. Just isolated myself from any chance to touch, to feel, or to love. To me, it was a cycle of hope born, then pain. When people bonded together were torn apart. No one came away whole. Another song came to symbolize for me. The reality of what we called love.

... The music slowly fades in...

I learned the truth at seventeen that love was meant for beauty queens
And high school girls with clear-skinned smiles who married young and then retired.
The valentines I never knew, the Friday night charades of youth were spent on one more

beautiful.
At seventeen I learned the truth.

And those of us with ravaged faces, lacking in the social graces,
Desperately remained at home,
Inventing lovers on the phone
Who called to say, "Come dance with me," and murmured vague obscenities.
It isn't all it seems at seventeen.

A brown-eyed girl in hand-me-downs whose name I never could pronounce
Said, "Pity, please, the ones who serve; they only get what they deserve.
The rich related hometown queen who marries into what she needs.
A guarantee of company and haven for the elderly."

Remember those who win the game lose the love they sought to gain.
In debentures of quality and dubious integrity.
Their small-town eyes will gape at you in dull surprise when payment due
Exceeds accounts received at seventeen.

To those of us who know the pain of valentines that never came,
And those whose names were never called when choosing sides for basketball.
It was long ago and far away;
The world was much younger than today
And dreams were all they gave away for free to ugly duckling girls like me.

We all play the game and when we dare to cheat ourselves at solitaire.
Inventing lovers on the phone,
Repeating other lives unknown
That call and say, "Come dance with me," and murmur vague obscenities
At ugly duckling girls like me at seventeen.

Narrator: By the time I turned eighteen, I knew the rules to the game. I played accordingly. I had become a man of the world. Love, with a capital "L", was an ideal invented by writers to sell cards and fiction. When girls told me they loved me, my answer was, "What do you want?" It was amusing. Just a game. Expecting nothing, I again found myself in love. This time, it wasn't infatuation. I gave myself to a woman. My world changed again. I discovered that for her happiness, I would change anything about myself I could. And I tried. For her sake, I wore my hair long. Because she loved it, I learned to dance, because she did. For years, she was my world. I thought she'd be my wife. I am sure I'm not the first. To admit I still don't know what happened. Ultimately, the one thing I wouldn't change was the one thing she couldn't live with. For the sake of children we'd never raise in harmony, she left me. Alone with scars. And I wrapped them around what was left of me. Left love, ... and trust .. and hope behind. Later, she tried to put what we had back together. But I couldn't. I had nothing left. Just bitterness.

... The music starts again ...

At first I was afraid I was petrified
Kept thinkin' I could never live without you by my side;
But then I spent so many nights
Thinkin' how you did me wrong
And I grew strong

And so you're back from outer space I just walked in to find you here with that sad look upon your face I should have changed that stupid lock I should have made you leave your key If I'd've known for just one second you'd back to bother me
Go on now, go walk out the door Just turn around now ('cause) you're not welcome anymore Weren't you the one who tried to hurt me with goodbye Did I crumble Did you think I'd lay down and die?
Oh no, not.I. I will survive Oh as long as I know how to love I know I'll stay alive; I've got all my life to live, I've got all my love to give and I'll survive, I will survive. Hey hey. It took all the strength I had not to fall apart Kept trying' hard to mend the pieces of my broken heart, And I spent oh so many nights Just feeling sorry for myself. I used to cry But now I hold my head up high
And you see me somebody new I'm not that chained up little person still in love with you, And so you feel like droppin' in And just expect me to be free, Now I'm savin' all my lovin' for someone who's lovin' me Go on now.go...

...Music abruptly cuts out

Narrator: And that's where we leave that story. It's a familiar one. We've all been there. Hurt by love and loss. By opening our arms, to find it left our hearts unprotected. That's one face of love. Luckily, it's not the only one.....

*.... The lights go down, the **Narrator** leaves the stage. Lights come back up as the main entrée is served.... After servers have cleared the floor, the lights go back down. The **Narrator** takes his place again on stage, the lights come up, and he continues.....*

Narrator: I know what I said earlier might have made some uncomfortable. Brought back memories best left buried. If so, I'm sorry. What I say next might also disturb some. For that, I cannot apologize. I only hope you'll listen with an open mind. Because the next face of love we present, is the first aspect man ever knew. And still the truest. I believe almost everything my parents ever showed me about love. And most of what they told me. So I believed my Mom. When she sang to me....

"Jesus loves the little children. All of the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."

I knew about the love of parents. How it remained constant. No matter how bad you messed up. So love by God seemed likely. But sooner or later, I knew I'd hear it for myself. And I did. I heard Jesus whisper to me, "I love you." For the first time, I really noticed Him. I started spending time at His place. Before long, it was easy to tell Him, "I love you too!" Of course, there's a difference in feeling like you're in love. And knowing how to express it. It was my first experience trying to please a supernatural lover..

*..... The lights go down on the **Narrator** and come up on a jail scene..... A **man** sits in a cold gray cell on a bunk. On the stone wall, beside the barred door, a single dim light bulb burns. The **man** sits, twiddling his thumbs, with a heavy sigh now and then. He slowly gets up, goes over to the wall, and adds a mark to many others, clearly denoting the passage of time. He comes back to the bunk, sits to stare vacantly ahead. He then begins to twiddle his thumbs again. His boredom is suddenly interrupted by the **jailor** at the door.*

Jailor: (*Opens door and stands in the opening*) Your wife's here. Want me to let her in?

Man: (*Stands up, faces door, excitedly*) Of course I do! Bring her in!

... Wife enters through the door, dressed in a bridal gown. The jailor leaves and shuts the door behind him....As she enters, a spotlights slowly brightens the scene. Husband and wife embrace one other. She pulls away and reaches in her bag.

Bride: Look, Honey! Brought you something. (*She begins to pull out candy, magazines, and books.*) You'll love these.

Man: (*Sets them on the bunk, reaches to take her hand again*) I know I will. Right now, I just want to enjoy your company.

An organ plays a somber introduction, and then swings into a light rendition of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" The man and wife sway together in a slow dance, holding hands. The man sings the chorus to her. Once done, they laugh and sit on the bunk together. He becomes serious.

Man: Honey? Thanks for taking the time. To be here with me. Be ever so careful when you leave. Remember what I told you? About talking to strangers?

Wife: Of course, Silly! What are so afraid of?

Man: I just worry That when we're apart, you'll forget me. That I'll lose your love to another. I guess I'm just jealous!

Wife: Hey! (*Trying to lighten things up*) I know when I've it good!

Man: (*Still serious*) Stay true to me, love! Someday, when you least expect it, I'll be back. Then we can be together forever.

*... His conversation is interrupted by the **jailor** at the door...*

Jailor: Sorry, Folks! Time for her to go. Visiting hours are over.

...They rise, embrace, and she moves to the door...

Man: (*Anxiously*) When will you be back? To see me again?

Bride: (*Frowns*) What a silly question, Honey. I always come to church on Sunday mornings!

*... With that she leaves. The **jailer** shuts the door. As this happens, the spotlight goes out. It leaves him alone in the cell again with just the dim bulb burning. He slowly crosses back to the bunk, sits down, sighs heavily, and resumes twiddling his thumbs. The light goes out, the **prisoner** quietly exits....The **Narrator** quietly sits as servers refill drinks and set dessert on the tables. When they are done, light slowly comes back up on the **Narrator**.*

Narrator: It took a while. But that wasn't the relationship God wanted with me. But He was patient. Slowly began to teach me what He calls "love". Some people laughingly call what we had, the zeal of a new convert. But it's as real to me now as then.

The years have taken none of my memories. For a long time, my world revolved around getting to know Him better. Somehow, I caught a glimpse of what He went through. When he died to buy my love. A new song ran through my life...

I love Him! I love Him! I love Him!
What more can I say, but that I, really love Him?
And I will try, to live my life, so that it says it too.
I love Him. I love Him. I really love Him.”

I was learning something about love. That for the happiness of the one I loved, I'd change anything about myself I could. And I tried. For His sake, I kept my hair short. Because He loved to talk to me, I learned to pray. For years, He was my world. I thought I'd become His bride. I'm sure I'm not the first to say this. But to this day, I still don't know what happened. Ultimately, what I wasn't willing to change were the things God couldn't live with. He wanted total commitment. So I left Him. At the same time my natural love left me, I left God's love, ... and trust .. and hope behind. Later, He tried to put what we had back together. But I couldn't. I had nothing left to give..... I wanted to, but just knew. I could never return a love that pure. I wasn't worthy of it. I'd disappointed Him too many times. Unable to believe in myself, I couldn't believe in God's love either. ... Like the woman caught in adultery, His love made no sense to me. I wanted love on my terms, under my control. His was too good to be true. The song played on in my heart....

.... *Music begins, lights go down on the Narrator and come up on Mary singing, hauntingly, "I Don't Know how to Love Him" ...*

Narrator: I didn't know how to love Him either. All I knew of love? What I'd learned of natural love. And because He didn't pursue when I pulled away? I thought He'd left me. For years I walked paths distant from God. Times I tried to pray? Just making noise. Systematically, I destroyed everything good and pure and holy in my life. Then I hit bottom. Hurting and bitter. Desperate to mean something to someone. Or die. Hoping to matter to anyone, I came back to Him. I think more than anything, I just wanted to say goodbye. To tell Him that of all I'd loved and lost, I missed Him the most. ... To my astonishment, with nothing to offer but rags and rubble, I felt Him move inside me again. Felt His arms around me. Heard Him whisper, "You're still worth every price I'll ever pay"..... That's the face of God's love. The scriptures promised He'd restore the years the canker worm destroyed. Through His love, I've again found joy, and hope, and peace. Through His mercy, He gave me the love of a godly woman. To give my life to as He gave His. Through the salvation He bought with blood, my life has meaning and purpose I couldn't imagine. Not in my wildest dreams. Like the woman with the alabaster box, in the face of that kind of love, I'm helpless. Nothing I can do, no worship I can to Him, is too extravagant...

... *Music to "The Alabaster Box" begins.. Lights go down on the Narrator and come up on girl performing sign language to the soundtrack. When the song is over, the light fades off to nothing. In the darkness, the Narrator speaks again....*

Narrator: If you ask me to show you the best example of love on this earth, I'd show you the face, and the hands, of my children's mother. She is my wife and I love her.

When almost married, a wise old woman told me. True love ... is when the happiness of someone else matters to you more than your own. I've seen that in her love for me and our children. God said true love ... was when a man would lay down his life for a friend. By either definition, the God who created you? He loves you. If you've ever considered and rejected giving your life to God, understand. Because He loves you, He won't make you to come to Him. Your happiness will always supercede His. But if you ever wonder whether His love is still an option. For you, I tell you tonight that it is. By His definition of love, He would die to have you in His arms.... That's the face of God's love. We leave you tonight with this. Like the woman caught in adultery.

Conclusion: We cowered in the dust that day.
Naked, shamed and all alone
Waiting, wanting death and pain
The cruel mercy of the stones

Made for love and happiness
Meant to be a bride
Stripped of all our dignity
Just used and cast aside

Sudden kindness in a touch
Hands placed into ours
We felt with breathless wonder
The open bleeding scars

Deserving death, yet pardoned
By a sacrifice unheard of
We dared to turn our eyes to stare
Into the face of love