First Hebrew Shakespeare Translations
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In front of the citadel (Chesed and musicians)

Musicians, I shall pay your wages and you will play well

Receiving the army commander with a song of blessing for the dawn.

(The musicians cheer and the clown emerges from the house)

What are these instruments in your hand, are they from Naples

That they issue their sound like a sound coming out of the nostrils?

What is wrong with you, my friend, that you ask such a thing?

Tell me, are these called wind instruments?

Yes, my friend, that is what they are called.

I know that their wind is futility and has no benefit.

Our spirit is willing within us, and we are not planning evil.

The wind instruments release all their wind, and hot air comes out of their mouths.

But here is money for you, sufficient for your wages

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1 This and the following speeches until Doeg’s entrance are prose in the original (3.1.3–4).
2 This is a play on words referring back to ‘wind’ in the previous line, as the word רו"ח means both ‘wind’ and ‘spirit’.
3 Ps. 51:12  ‘and renew a willing spirit within me’.
4 Can also mean ‘futility’.
Now the army commander said that the sound of your playing is very pleasant.

Therefore save it for another day, and do not play it today.

**The Music Director**

If it does not please him, we shall not continue further.

**The Clown**

If you know how to play without making a sound, do as is best in your eyes, but if the sound of song is heard, it will not please the ears of the army commander, so those who know him say.

**The Music Director**

We do not know how to play as you wish.

**The Clown**

If so, then put your instruments in your sacks for I shall go from here, and as for you, watch and do as I do.

(= The musicians exit)

**Chesed**

Please listen to the word of my mouth, my honest friend.

**The Clown**

I shall listen to the word of your mouth and not the mouth of your honest friend.

**Chesed**

Do away with laughter and deceit, and take this shekel from my hand; and if the woman who attends the lady rises from her bed, say to her that Chesed is asking to see her.

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5 Isa. 51:3; Ps. 98:5.
6 This is a double-entendre; it could also mean ‘the word of the mouth of your honest friend’.
7 This response is based on the double-entendre from the previous line; it is a close parallel of Shakespeare’s ‘Dost thou hear, mine honest friend?/No, I hear not your honest friend, I hear you’ (3.1.21–2).
8 Cf. Shakespeare’s ‘a poor piece of gold’ (3.1.23–4). A shekel is a biblical weight (commonly used with reference to silver and gold) corresponding to approximately ten grams.
Will you do this for me?

**THE CLOWN**

She is rising from her bed, and when she arises to come here

I shall indeed tell the matter to her.

**CHESED**

Go and do as you say, my friend.

(*The clown exits and Doeg enters*)

You have come at a **favourable time.** Doeg.

**DOEG**

Have you not lain down on your bed all night?

**CHESED**

No, for the **morning had dawned** before we parted.

Just now I sent for your wife to be called to me

So that I might ask her whether she can take me

To see the lady Asenath.

**DOEG**

I shall send her to you immediately

And I shall seek a pretext to lead the Cushite somewhere else

In order that you might **speak with the lady, according to everything which is in your heart,**

And there will be no stranger with you. (*Exits*)

**CHESED**

With all my heart I thank you for this great kindness of yours

For such a man of great kindness and such a faithful friend in sorrow as you

I have not found even in Florence, my native city.

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9 Isa. 49:8.
10 Gen. 44:3.
11 1 Kings 10:2 - ‘and she spoke to him about everything that was in her heart’.
Welcome, dear officer!

Your sorrow is my sorrow and I am distressed at your distress

But quickly, go out into a spacious place and sorrow and sighing will flee.

The army commander and his wife are speaking about you

She is striving with all her might to have you acquitted

And he is responding that the man whom you gave many wounds

Is honourable among his people and his family is exalted in the land

Therefore he has pronounced his sentence, to remove you until the anger passes.

However, he is saying that you are dear in his eyes

And his love for you will supplicate on your behalf even without any entreatying

And indeed he will wait for an appropriate time to restore you to your position.

Indeed, if only you would listen to me, do me a kindness

And ask that I be given the opportunity to see the lady

In order that I might speak a few words with her alone.

Come into the house; I shall give you the opportunity

So that you might pour out your lament which is in your heart.

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12 2 Sam. 22:20
13 Isa. 35:10.
14 Isa. 26:20.
15 Ps. 102:1

"אַתִּי לַמֶּרְחָ֖ב וַיֹּצֵ֥א" 'and He brought me out into a spacious place'.
"שִׂיחֽוֹ يִשְׁפֹּ֥ךְ יְ֝הוָ֗ה וְלִפְנֵ֥י" 'and he pours out his lament before the LORD'.
I shall never forget this kind deed of yours. *(Exeunt)*

A chamber in the citadel *(Ithiel, Doeg, and a few noblemen)*

Give these letters, Doeg, to the ship’s captain

So that he might give them to our lord the prince of the nation

As for me, I am going to inspect the ramparts and walls in the citadel

And there you will find me.

Yes, my lord.

Will you go with me, ministers, to see the citadel?

We shall follow our lord. *(Exeunt)*

In front of the citadel *(Asenath, Chesed, and Milcah)*

Do not fear, dear Chesed, may your heart be confident

That I shall do everything which is in my power to save you.

Do so, my lady, for my husband is greatly distressed

And it grieves his heart just like the anguish of his own soul.

It is a testimony to your husband that he is faithful of spirit.

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16 Lam. 2:8.

17 Gen. 6:6 ‘and it grieved His heart’ (referring to God’s regret at having made humans after seeing how wicked they had become).
As for you, Chesed, do not fear, for I shall make peace
Between you and my husband, and you will be friends as before.

**CHESED**
My generous lady! **Your generosity has made me great**;¹⁸
Consider me your faithful servant, and let come on me what may.¹⁹

**ASENATH**
I give you my thanks, for you are a friend to my husband
And you have been a man of his confidence and faithful to his house for many days
And although he may be acting as a stranger to you, his heart is not distant from you
Other than by **outward appearance**.²⁰

**CHESED**
So it is, my lady;
Except that the outward appearance may continue for many days
For it grazes on **wind and fills its stomach with the east wind**;²¹
Or he might find a new pretext **not to bring back his banished one**.²²
And since I have been abandoned and another is taking my office
The army commander will forget my love and will no longer remember my service.

**ASENATH**
God forbid, do not say such a thing; behold, I stand as surety

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¹⁸ 2 Sam. 22:36 ‘and Your gentleness has made me great’; also Ps. 18:36 (18:35 in English Bibles).
²⁰ This phrase derives from Eccles. 6:9, where it appears with the meaning ‘what the eye can see’, but seems to be used here with the meaning of a similar collocation מראה ‘outward appearance’, which appears numerous times in rabbinic and later Hebrew literature and denotes a principle of Jewish law whereby one should refrain from engaging in behaviour that, although permissible, might mistakenly appear to an onlooker to constitute a prohibited activity.
²¹ Job 15:2 **בִּטְנֽוֹ קָדִ֣ם וִֽימַלֵּ֖א דַֽﬠַת־ר֑וּחַ יַﬠֲנֶ֥ה הֶֽחָכָ֗ם’ ‘would a wise man answer with windy knowledge, and fill his stomach with the east wind?’
²² 2 Sam. 14:13 **אֶֽת־נִדְּחֽוֹ הַמֶּ֖לֶךְ הָשִׁ֥יב לְבִלְתִּ֛י’ ‘in that the king does not bring back his banished one’.
In the sight of this Milcah that you shall return to your position
And let your heart be resolute; if a word has gone out of my mouth
That I shall ensure to fulfil it, and I shall not alter what has gone out of my lips23
For I shall urge my husband and I shall not give him rest
But rather I shall pressure him with words and I shall make his bed like a school
And his table like a set table24 filled with chastisement and rebuke
And everywhere that he turns he shall hear Chesed's case from my mouth,
Therefore make your heart merry for your salvation is near
For I shall give myself over to death rather than abandon arguing your case.

(Ithiel and Doeg enter from afar)

milcah My lady, my lord is coming towards us over there.
chesed My lady, I shall go from here.
ensenath But why are you going? Stay, so that I might speak about you.
chesed I can stay no longer, for my soul is terrified
And my spirit is not prepared within me to please my lord.
ensenath If so, turn around and go in accordance with your heart's desire. (Chesed exits)

23 Ps. 89:35 (89:34 in English Bibles).
24 Ezek. 23:41; this phrase is also the title of Joseph Caro’s authoritative code of Jewish law (first published in Venice, 1564–5).
This matter is not good in my eyes.

What is this that you said?

Nothing, commander, or I do not know what I said.

Is that not Chesed, who parted from my wife there?

Chesed? No, my lord! My heart does not allow me to consider

That upon seeing your face, he would steal away to leave here

Like a criminal and guilty man.

Yet my heart tells me that he was there.

Listen to me, my husband, my lord! Behold, I have just spoken here

With a sad and wretched man who yearns for you

For he despairs from your rebuke and is dying in your anger.

And who is this about whom you are speaking?

Why, it is your officer Chesed. If I have found favour in your eyes

And if I have power to guide you, won’t you grant his request

For he went astray in error, and not with wilful intent or deceit

For if you have not found his heart to be faithful before you

Who is he, and where is he, who is faithful in the land?

So now, please, my dear one, please call upon him to return.

25 Ps. 86:4 ‘because I yearn for You, O Lord’.
26 The terms בזדון ‘in error’ and בזדון ‘with wilful intent’ are concepts in Jewish law discussed in various sources including the Babylonian Talmud, in Moses Maimonides’ twelfth-century legal guide Mishneh Torah (Hilkhot Teshuva 1:1), and in the Yom Kippur liturgy.
27 Esther 7:5.
ithiel  Has he gone from here?

asenath  With a broken heart sup he went from me and left his grief in my bosom.

And I am very distressed at his distress. Please, the one whom my soul loves?

Summon him to return.

ithiel  Not now, pleasant Asenath, but at another time.

asenath  But when? Will he come soon?

ithiel  He will come quickly, for your sake.

asenath  This evening at mealtime?

ithiel  Not this evening.

asenath  Tomorrow for the noontime meal?

ithiel  At noon I shall not sit at home

For I shall dine with the military men in the citadel.

asenath  If so, then tomorrow in the evening

Or on Tuesday in the morning, at noon, or in the evening

Or on Wednesday morning. Please set the appointed time

But do not postpone it more than three days.

On my life! Indeed he confesses and repents with all his heart

Even though his iniquity is trivial in men’s eyes.

Indeed the matter is true that punishing one who is dear and honourable

Is good and proper at a time of war, to make him an example for many.

28 Ps. 51:19 (51:17 in English Bibles).
29 Song of Songs 1:7, 3:1, 2, 3.
30 Josh. 4:13.
31 Prov. 28:13.
But the rebuke is enough for him, on account of his small mistake.

Speak, Ithiel, when may he come? As for me, I wonder very much

If you were to ask something of me, whether I would be able to refuse you

And turn here and there like you. Is it not Chessed

Who came with you to bring me into the covenant of your love

And whenever I refused, he guided my heart towards you

So how is the matter to be atoned for now so weighty?

If it were me instead of you, believe me –

Please, that's enough from you! Indeed he can come at any time;

For I cannot refuse you.

It is not kindness from you; just as if I had implored you

To eat food, to put on a garment, and to protect yourself from cold

Or to do something for your own good

Who would consider it kindness, that you did this?

But if I should come to seek kindness and compassion from you

To test the power of your love, I would not come with a small matter

But rather I would seek to ask difficult and weighty things

32 This meaning of the verbal root נ.ד.ב. in the hitpa‘el stem is first attested in the medieval period (Even-Shoshan 2003, 5: 1483). While the form occurs in the Hebrew Bible, it has a different meaning, ‘to display marvellous power’ (Job 10:16).
Until terror seized your soul[33] to fulfil my request.

Ithiel

I shall deny you nothing –

Just one thing I ask of you; grant me this request of mine

Wait for me a little bit so that I may speak with myself alone.

Asenath

Shall I deny you anything?

I am going.

Ithiel

Go in peace. I shall come to see you quick as lightning.

Asenath

Do as you desire, my husband

For everything which you say, I shall do and obey.[34]

(Exits with Milcah)

Ithiel

Beautiful and wretched one! May death destroy me if I do not love you;

Your love is stored in my heart, and if I should not love you any longer

Then everything would revert to void.

Doeg

Noble-spirited[35] lord –

Ithiel

What do you say, Doeg?

Doeg

Did Chesed know before you married the lady

That you desired her?

Ithiel

He was my man of confidence from the beginning to the end.

But why do you ask such a thing?

Doeg

I wanted to know this in order to calm the thoughts of my heart

[33] Job 21:6 פַּלָּצֽוּת בְ֝שָׂרִ֗י וְאָחַ֥ז 'and terror seizes my flesh'.
[34] Exod. 24:7 וְנִשְׁמָֽע נַﬠֲשֶׂ֥ה יְהוָ֖ה אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּ֥ר 'and they said, “Everything which the L ord has spoken to us we shall do and obey”'; in rabbinic Judaism this phrase serves as a model for the way in which Jews should follow Jewish law, by observing the laws even when their significance is unclear.
And there is nothing to disturb your spirit.

Ithiel: And what are the thoughts of your heart?

Doeg: I did not imagine that Chesed had known her since then.

Ithiel: It is so, and he was also the messenger between us

Whom we sent from time to time.

Doeg: He was the messenger? –

Ithiel: He was the messenger! He and not another –

What strange things do you see here? Is he not faithful?

Doeg: Faithful?

Ithiel: Faithful, I said.

Doeg: According to what I think, my lord –

Ithiel: What do you think?

Doeg: What do I think, my lord?

Ithiel: ‘Think, my lord’

As I live, it is like a heavenly echo, he is repeating my words

As if his heart were full of strange and terrible thoughts.

If thoughts have arisen in your heart, tell them in the sight of the sun.

When Chesed went away from my wife, I heard you say

That ‘the matter is not good’; what is not good in your eyes?

And when you heard that he was my man of confidence in my love

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36 The heavenly echo (Hebrew קול בת קול, lit. ‘daughter of a voice’), is a concept in the Mishnah, Talmud, and other rabbinic literature, denoting a divine voice that reveals God’s will to humans (see Rothkoff 2007).

37 2 Sam. 12:11.
And he was the messenger between us, you called out in bewilderment of heart.  

‘He was the messenger?’ And your face pursed up suddenly.

As if a terrible idea had arisen in your heart and led your thoughts astray.

If you love me truly and sincerely, tell me your thoughts.

DOEG You know, my lord, that I love you.

ITHIEL I know that it is so;

And because I trust that your love is pure

And because you weigh your words on a scale before they pass your lips Therefore the signs of your face and your few words frighten me.

If a cunning man and a scoundrel does such a thing it is deception

As these are his ways, continually to deceive and lead astray his fellow;

But in a pure-hearted man like you, they are a faithful testimony

That there is a war within you which you cannot sustain.

DOEG I can trust in Chesed and can also say on oath

That he is faithful.

ITHIEL I also think him to be so.

DOEG A man should always be in secret as in the open

38 Deut. 28:28.

39 This verb originates in the rabbinic period (Even-Shoshan 2003, 5: 1675); although the root in this stem is attested in the Hebrew Bible (in Job 22:16), it has a different meaning, ‘to be snatched’.

40 Judg. 9:16, 19.

41 Ps. 24:4.
And not one man in the open and another man in secret.

Ithiel

To be one man in mouth and heart, this is the instruction for mankind. 42

Doeg

Therefore my heart thinks that Chesed is faithful.

Ithiel

But apart from that, there are other things in your heart

Please tell me everything that your heart whispers

Let your lips utter clearly even an evil and bitter matter

For evil tidings should only be made known with bitter words.

Doeg

Please forgive me, my noble lord:

Indeed I am prepared to keep all your commandments 43

But not to do something which even a despicable slave would not do.

Shall I reveal the hidden treasures of my heart, if my heart is pondering calamities?

And shall I not restrain the fruit of my lips, 44 if I have conceived destruction and disaster?

Where is the palace through which an unclean thing has not passed?

Or a pure heart which has never turned aside to accuse

And has not made a perverted judgement 45 like a truthful and righteous judge?

42 2 Sam. 7:19.
43 Cf. Shakespeare’s ‘every act of duty’ (3.3.137); Salkinson has replaced this with an explicitly Jewish formulation of duty, mitzvoth, or commandments.
44 Isa. 57:19 שְׂפָתָ֑יִם נִ֣יב ‘the fruit of the lips’.
45 Hab. 1:4.
Ithiel the Cushite of Venice

If you are thinking in your heart that a man has done me an injustice
And you do not reveal it to me, you too, Doeg, are among the conspirators.

I admit before you, commander, regarding my affliction and my pain
That this is my way at times, to spy out with an evil eye
And to find iniquity in men who are innocent of any iniquity
For out of my great zeal for my lord, or also out of sorrow of heart
I see the shadow of mountains as
Therefore I beg of you
Do not take heed of my words and do not make trouble for yourself
For my knowledge is very trivial and the visions of my heart lead me astray
And you will not find rest in my words, nor benefit to you
Nor is it an advantage or wisdom for me to inform you of what is in my ponderings.

What do your words hint at?

A reputation is better for a man and a woman than any glory or jewel.
The one who steals my bag of money steals dirt and dust
For it is as naught and nothing, the money was in my hand
And now it is in his hand, as it was in the hands of others before me.

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46 Neh. 2:2.
47 This expression denoting paranoid exaggeration is thought to have originated in the modern era (Even-Shoshan 2003, 2: 422), but is based loosely on Judg. 9:36 כָּאֲנָשִֽׁים רֹאֶ֖ה אַתָּ֥ה הֶהָרִ֛ים צֵ֧ל 'you see the shadow of the mountains as if they were men’ (which is uncertain in meaning; see Amit 2004: 532).
48 Job 15:12 'and what do your eyes wink at?’ Cf. Shakespeare’s ‘Zounds! What dost thou mean?’ (3.3.157).
But the one who \textit{sullies my reputation} wrongs my soul, and \textit{he has made me like an empty vessel}.

\textbf{Ithiel} As I live, I shall not turn aside until I know your thoughts.

\textbf{Doeg} You will not be able to know them, not even if my heart were in your hand. As long as I am still master over it.

\textbf{Ithiel} Indeed?

\textbf{Doeg} Guard yourself from the spirit of jealousy, for it comes like rot.

And like a maggot it scorns the food upon which it lives.

Happy is the one who turns a blind eye to his wife, if she is adulterous, he does not warm himself in her love, yet the fire of jealousy does not devour him.

But woe to the husband who loves and is jealous over his wife. Both his love and his jealousy become, like death and Sheol, an abode for him.

\textbf{Ithiel} Woe is me, wretched man!

\textbf{Doeg} Poor and happy in his lot, he is the man of great wealth.

But the man of great wealth who constantly fears lest he become poor is none so poor as he. – \textit{O God of the spirits!}

Please save my tribe from the spirit of jealousy.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Exod. 5:21} אַךְ הֵבָאָשִׁים אֶת רִיתִי: 'you have sullied our reputation'.
  \item \textit{Jer. 51:34} רִיק כְּלִי הִצִּיגַנִי: 'he has made me an empty vessel'.
  \item \textit{Num. 16:22} לְכָל־בָּשָׂר הָרוּחֹת אֱלֹהֵי אֵל: 'God of the spirits of all flesh', also Num. 27:16.
  \item Salkinson has chosen to translate Shakespeare's 'my tribe' (3.3.177) with an expression that is used in rabbinic and later literature to refer specifically to Jews (Even-Shoshan 2003, 1: 211); see, for example, Mishnah Bava Qamma 1:2.
\end{itemize}
Ithiel the Cushite of Venice

Why are you speaking your words? Does jealousy graze on my soul?

Or do I change my face in the mornings, like the changes of the face of the moon

To search here and there, in case I might find some indecent thing?53

It is not so, Doeg; if my wife has caused me

To fear whether she has been unfaithful to me, then I have already made my judgement.

It is better for me to be like a goat in the forest

Than to watch after a woman lest she go whoring away from me.54

If it is said in my ears that my wife is beautiful

Loves banquets and companions, her mouth is open to speak clearly55

And she knows how to play well, to sing and to dance

All this will not arouse the spirit of jealousy within me

For these additions add charm to an honest woman.

Nor is it because I am unworthy that I fear lest she betray me

Going after strangers who are greater than me in my worth

For she saw me with her eyes and she chose me with her soul’s desire,

Therefore I say one thing: I shall not judge her

54 Hosea 1:2. יְהוָֽה מֵֽאַחֲרֵ֖י הָאָ֔רֶץ תִזְנֶה֙ כִּֽי־זָנֹ֤ו הָלִֽכְתָּהּ for the land goes whoring away from the Lord’.
55 Isa. 32:4.
Until I see what disgrace is found in her.\(^{56}\)

And when I find some flaw in her, then I shall investigate and enquire

And if there is iniquity in her, there will be no more discussion

For destruction will be decreed.\(^{57}\)

and love and jealousy will be no more.

**DOEG**

I am happy to hear this from your mouth, for now I am prepared

To show you my love and my service, without obstacles or hindrances.

So now, listen to my word and I shall tell everything which is in my heart

But I shall not present my case.\(^{58}\)

what evidence is in my hand?

But I shall say at the start, keep your eye on your wife

And observe her when she is sitting together with Chesed

Not with a jealous eye, nor with too much trust

For I fear that a sinful thing might be done

To a noble-hearted man such as you, and therefore I say guard yourself.

For the women of Venice do things in secret

Which they would not do before their husbands’ eyes

And every meditation of their hearts\(^{59}\) is only to hide their deeds

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56 Job 26:14 ‘and how faint (or: whispering) a word is heard of Him’; Salkinson seems to have been using the word שם in its medieval sense of ‘condemnation’ or ‘disgrace’ (Even-Shoshan 2003, 6: 1921).

57 Isa. 10:23, 28:22; Dan. 9:27.

58 Job 5:8.

59 Ps. 49:4 (49:3 in English Bibles) ‘and the mediation of my heart’.
And not to keep iniquity far away.

Ithiel: Is this the testimony of your mouth?

Doeg: Why, she deceived her father when she married you

And while she was acting as a stranger, as if she were afraid

To look you in the eye, she already desired you.

Ithiel: The matter is true.

Doeg: If one as tender in years as she is possesses such cunning

To cover her father’s eyes with a blanket lest he see anything

Until he believed that it was witchcraft –

Indeed I fear greatly, lest I have sinned with my lips,

Forgive me my lord, for your great love has pressured me.

Ithiel: I shall never forget your great love and kindness for all days.

Doeg: I see that your heart has sunk.

Ithiel: No, no, it is nothing.

Doeg: But I see that you are saddened,

Indeed I hope that you will have the wisdom to see

That my words spring from a source of love and friendship,

But I am distressed to see you grieved in your heart

And therefore please, my lord, do not think deeply in order to find in my words

A different notion and interpretation; I have only come to warn you.

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60 Gen. 6:6

And it grieved His heart (referring to God’s regret at having made humans upon seeing how wicked they had become).
Ithiel: I do not seek a different interpretation.

Doeg: For a different interpretation would lead you into the wasteland where there is no path. Which my words do not contain and which has not occurred to me.

As Chessed is my faithful friend - but I see That my lord’s face has fallen, and your spirit is troubled within you.

Ithiel: Only very little –

For in my opinion, Asenath’s spirit is faithful to me.

Doeg: If only it were so, and so may it be in your eyes For all time.

Ithiel: But the heart is devious and easily turns away from the path.

Doeg: This is the stumbling block; and therefore I also say That the woman is baffling in my eyes, and she has a strange way about her.

Indeed many desirable young men possessing good looks and splendour From among the most honourable men of her native land, urged her to marry them But she turned her back and refused to look at them Not in the manner of damsels and not according to the manner of all the earth.

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61 Ps. 107:40.
62 Gen. 41:8; רוּחֵוִו וַתִּפָּ֣ﬠֶם 'and his spirit was troubled'; also Dan. 2:3.
63 Jer. 17:9.
64 Isa. 30:11; מִנֵּי־דֶ֔רֶךְ סָרוּ 'turn away from the road; go off the path'.
65 Isa. 8:14.
66 Ezek. 23:6, 12, 23.
So who would not say that there is a spirit of confusion within her?68

But please forgive me my lord, I am not a slanderer

And I would not disparage her, if I were not very worried

Lest she open her eyes to weigh on the balance of her mind

The men of her land against your worth, and deduct from your worth.

ithiel

Go in peace –

If you find anything else, please tell me

Order your wife to keep her watch with open eyes.

And now go and leave me alone.

doege

I am going, my lord. (He makes to exit)

ithiel

Why did I take a wife for myself?

This blameless man uncovers a handbreadth and covers two handbreadths69

And out of what he has seen or knows, he has not told me the half.70

doege

Please let me entreat you; please do not question either in the depths

Or in the heights above;71 every unknown thing will be made known

And will be revealed in time. And if you have determined

To restore Chesed, for he is a man of valour,

And keeps his watch in faith, it would be better after a few days

68 Isa. 19:14
69 Babylonian Talmud Nedarim 20b ‘he uncovers a handbreadth and covers a handbreadth’. Cf. Shakespeare’s ‘sees and knows more – much more – than he unfolds’ (3.3.247).
70 1 Kings 10:7
71 Isa. 7:11

Ithiel the Cushite of Venice
So that you might familiarize yourself with him in his ways, because he will make himself known by his actions\textsuperscript{72}

And examine your wife as well when she intercedes on his behalf

And observe her, how she pressures you intensely to restore him

For with this touchstone\textsuperscript{73} her heart can be well examined.

But you will do well if you consider me hasty

And mock my fear, because I am afraid for nothing,

For she is pure and there is no iniquity in her

And regarding this I beseech you to listen to the voice of your servant.

I know how to control my spirit; do not worry about me.

Now I am going, in accordance with your words. (Exits)

This man is honest and faithful, and he has a proud soul\textsuperscript{74}

Understanding the ways of men and their deeds, both small and large.

If I find that my wife has strayed from me

Even though I have kept her close to me, like a seal on my heart\textsuperscript{75}

And I have tied her with bonds of love, like frontlets on my arm\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{72} Prov. 20:11.

\textsuperscript{73} This expression derives originally from Isa. 28:16, but the meaning of ‘touchstone’ or ‘acid test’ is thought to be a modern innovation (Even-Shoshan 2003, 1: 8).

\textsuperscript{74} Mishnah Avot 5:19.

\textsuperscript{75} Song of Songs 8:6 ‘place me like a seal on your heart’.

\textsuperscript{76} Cf. Shakespeare’s ‘jesses’ (3.3.265), straps attached between a hawk’s leg and the falconer’s wrist (Honigmann 1997: 225, note 265; Crystal and Crystal 2002: 247). Salkinson has domesticated this image by replacing the falconry term with an allusion to the Jewish commandment of tying tefillin, or phylacteries, on the arm for weekday morning prayers.
I shall sever the ties from my arms like thread. And send her away like a swallow to fly where the wind is. Maybe all of this has come upon me because I am black and a Cushite.

And there is no honey under my tongue to speak flattery and smoothness; Or because I am old, past half my days and more, But despite this it is not right that she should have been unfaithful to me.

Woe is me, woe is me! The unfaithful girl is not mine – And all my comfort in my wretchedness is that I might loathe her. I took her for myself as a curse, and her beauty is a heartache to me I am ashamed that I trusted, for she is not mine. – It would be better for me to be a locust, to hop over the earth Or to live on mist and steam in a prison Than to dwell with my soul’s beloved one when strangers have a share of her This is the lot of commanders and the inheritance of the earth’s great men, Because it is not for us to live in safety, like the poor masses

77 Cf. Shakespeare’s ‘I’d whistle her off’ (3.3.266); as previously (see preceding note), Salkinson has exchanged Shakespeare’s falconry reference for an image of Jewish prayer with tefillin.
78 Song of Songs 4:11 ‘there is honey and milk under your tongue’.
79 Ps. 119:50.
80 Lev. 11:21 ‘but these you may eat of every flying creeping thing that goes on all four, which has legs above its feet with which to hop upon the earth’.
81 Deut. 12:10 ‘and you will live in safety’; 1 Sam 12:11 ‘and you lived in safety’.
And as soon as we have left the womb, evil pursues us.

And lies in wait like death at the door – but Asenath is at the door.

(Asenath enters with Milcah)

If she is unfaithful, even the heavens are not pure in my eyes.

But I shall not yet plan evil for her without cause.

Ithiel

Ithiel, my beloved, what is wrong with you?

The noontime meal is prepared, and the honourable men of the town who have been invited are waiting for your arrival.

Ithiel

It was not right of me to be late.

Asenath

What is wrong with you, my husband, that you speak so seriously?

Do you not feel well?

Ithiel

My head, my head.

Asenath

Because you are often wakeful and do not sleep enough;

Let me bind your head with my handkerchief, and your pain will pass in a moment.

Ithiel

Your handkerchief is too small to bind my head.

Come into the chamber; I shall come after you.

(Rejects the handkerchief from his head and drops it on the ground)

82 Job 15:15

83 Mishnah Berakhot 5:1 (also appears in the Tosefta and in later rabbinic literature).

84 2 Kings 4:19.

85 This word appears twice in the Hebrew Bible (Isa. 3:22 and Ruth 3:15), where it means ‘shawl’ or ‘cloak’. From the rabbinic period onwards it more commonly means ‘handkerchief’; Salkinson is using it in the latter sense.
I am sorry for your pain. (Ithiel and Asenath exit)

To my heart’s joy I have found this handkerchief here

It is the first present that he gave her as a sign of their covenant.

My fickle and strange husband has urged me a hundred times

To steal it and give it to him; but it is precious in her eyes

In keeping with the Cushite’s oath for her to keep it as an eternal memento

And she carries it by her bosom continually and keeps it like a precious amulet

And she also utters words to it and kisses it in her love

But now that I have found it, I shall give it to my husband Doeg.

I cannot understand what he will do with the stolen item –

God alone knows, and I do not know what

But I shall do this, in order to calm his spirit.

What are you doing here by yourself?

Do not argue with me, when in my hand there is something to give you.

Something for me? Something wherein there is no pleasure –

In what do you have no pleasure?

86 Gen. 9:13, 17:11.
87 This noun is attested in Num. 5:15, but the sense of ‘memento’ in which Salkinson is using it is thought to be a medieval innovation (Even-Shoshan 2003, 3: 924).
In a foolish wife.  

And therefore you find pleasure in the tongue of the sly and destructive words. But what would you say if I gave you the handkerchief?  

Which handkerchief? The handkerchief that the Cushite gave to Asenath as a memento And which you have urged me several times to steal.  

And you have stolen it. God forbid that I steal it, it only happened to fall And I was summoned here and found the lost item Look; here it is in my hand.  

I knew that you were a woman of valour – give it to me.  

But tell me, what does the handkerchief have to do with you? What do you want to do with it, that you persuaded me to obtain it?  

What’s it to you to know that? (Snatches the handkerchief from her hand)  

What gain is there for you in this handkerchief? Give it back to me Lest my lady lose her wits when she sees that it is gone.  

See that no one finds out, lest you become a disgrace But I want it; get up and go.  

89 Prov. 9:13.  
90 Job 15:5.  
91 Ps. 52:6 (52:4 in English Bibles).  
92 Prov. 12:4, 31:10; Ruth 3:11.
I shall throw this handkerchief into Chesed’s chamber when no one is looking
And he will find it there. A jealous man believes
In signs more trifling than vapour as in wonders more reliable than the heavens.
And this will thus provide a small benefit and will not come back empty-handed,
As the cup of reeling\(^{93}\) which I have poured for the Cushite has already started to take its effect
For deceitful words, like poisoned water, are pleasing to the palate
Until they mix with the blood and turn into a stream of brimstone.\(^{94}\)

(Ithiel enters)
Behold, he comes towards me – no intoxicating water or mixed wine
And no balm or remedy\(^{95}\) will bring the sleep to your eyes
Nor the slumber to your eyelids\(^{96}\) which was so sweet for you last night.

Ithiel Has she indeed betrayed me? Has she betrayed me? –
Doeg That’s enough from you, army commander, of speaking about this matter.
Ithiel Stand back\(^{97}\) After all, you are the one who has brought the distress upon me;

\(^{93}\) Isa. 51:17.
\(^{94}\) Isa. 30:33.
\(^{95}\) Alshekh to Exod. 13, Deut. 4, Prov. 6, 18, 19.
\(^{96}\) Prov. 6:4 ‘do not give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids’.
\(^{97}\) Gen. 19:9.
I swear, I would prefer the woman’s infidelity to be in secret

Than to hear about the infidelity, its edge but not all of it.98

DOEG
What is my lord talking about?

ITHIEL
I knew nothing of her harlotry99 in secret

I did not notice or take heed, and I lacked for nothing,

I was calm previously and my sleep was pleasant100

And I did not find the kisses of Chesed’s mouth upon her lips.

A robbed man who does not recognize what has been stolen from him

Is not a robbed man, unless an informant has told him.

DOEG
I am sorry to hear your words.

ITHIEL
If only the men of the army, each insignificant and honourable man in the camp,

Tasted bread in secrecy from my bread and stolen water101 from my well

And I did not know anything, I would be calm and quiet in my happiness

But now my heart fails me,102 I cannot continue to rejoice in my lot. –

What do I have to do with you any more, all armed men carrying bows103

98 Num. 23:13 ‘you will see its edge, but you will not see all of it’.
100 Jer. 31:26.
101 Prov. 9:17 ‘stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasing’.
102 Ps. 40:13 (40:12 in English Bibles).
103 Ps. 78:9.
What do I have to do with you any more, all of my glorious troops
Which take pleasure in battles and boast with sword and spear
Remove, take away from me the sound of the horses’ neighing
The sound of timbrel and cymbals and all the thundering of weapons of war.
Remove from me standard and banner and all the shields of gold
Remove my splendid chariots and all my glorious beauty,
And you, instruments of the angels of death, from whose mouth arrogance comes out
Like the lightning of the God of the heavens and like the roar of His mighty thunder
Turn away, leave me alone! For the might of Ithiel is finished.

DOEG
Who would believe it, hearing such a thing?

ITHIEL
Look, villain! You must establish
That my beloved is committing adultery. (Seizes him by his neck)
For if it is not so, I swear by the One who lives forever
That your end will be bitter. It would be much better for you

104 1 Sam. 17:45, 47.
105 Alshekh to Isa. 59.
106 1 Sam. 8:7; 1 Chron. 18:7.
107 Isa. 22:18 ךָכְּבוֹדֶ֔ו מַרְכְּב֣וֹת ‘your glorious chariots’.
108 Isa. 28:1 מִפִּיכֶ֑ם ‘let [not] arrogance come out of your mouth’.
109 1 Sam. 2:3 מָוֶת מַלְאֲכֵי ‘let not arrogance come out of your mouth’.
110 Cf. Shakespeare’s ‘Jove’s dread clamours’ (3.3.359); Salkinson has replaced this with a reference to the monotheistic God.
111 Dan. 12:7 ‘and he swore by the One who lives forever’.

Ithiel the Cushite of Venice
To have been a dog from the womb, 
than to stand before my wrath.

DOEG
Have we come to this?

ITHIEL
Show me the vile thing; give me a reliable sign
Which cannot be criticized; and if there is no such thing
Woe to you, woe to you!

DOEG
My noble lord! –

ITHIEL
If you have slandered her in order to torture me
Do not implore favour any more. Go frowardly in the way of your heart!

Add horror to horror with a high hand.

Shake the heavens, make the earth tremble with your iniquity
And all these things will not add guilt to your guilt.

DOEG
Hurry, angels of mercy come to protect me!

Are you a man? Do you have a soul and a spirit?

Take my office from me – and may God help you.

Whereas I am a fool and a wretch, for I have lived

To see my honesty considered as a sin.

ITHIEL
But wait a bit more, perhaps you are honest and faithful.

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113 Isa. 57:17 make. 'but he went frowardly in the way of his heart'.
114 Exod. 14:8; Num. 15:30, 33:3.
115 Hag. 2:21 'I am going to shake the heavens'.
116 Isa. 14:16 make. 'the man who made the earth tremble'.
117 The source text has a rhyming couplet here 'hence/offence' (3.3.382–3) which Salkinson has not reproduced.
Ithiel of Venice

Ithiel

Sometimes I believe that my wife is faithful
And sometimes not; sometimes I believe
That you are honest, and sometimes not.
Therefore I say one thing; you must prove the matter to my eyes.
Indeed there are sufficient fetters with me, a knife and a deathly wrath
And also enough fire and water to exact revenge upon those who despise me.
For I have grown tired of bearing it; I cannot endure it any longer
I seek only a true investigation at the start.

Doeg

But I am not wise, because the honest man is a fool
And does not obtain that which he seeks.

Ithiel

Sometimes I believe that my wife is faithful
And sometimes not; sometimes I believe
That you are honest, and sometimes not.
Therefore I say one thing; you must prove the matter to my eyes.
Indeed there are sufficient fetters with me, a knife and a deathly wrath
And also enough fire and water to exact revenge upon those who despise me.
For I have grown tired of bearing it; I cannot endure it any longer
I seek only a true investigation at the start.

Doeg

Look, your heart burns like an oven, and fire consumes your bones
I regret that I ignited this fire for you
But after all, you seek a true investigation.

Ithiel

I seek it, and I shall not desist until I find it.

Doeg

Indeed you may find it as you seek, but what might suffice for you?
Would you stand watching with your eyes, while Chesed bends over her?

Salkinson has omitted Shakespeare’s ‘Her name, that was as fresh/As Dian’s visage, is now begrimed and black/As mine own face’ (3.3.389–91), which appears directly before this sentence in the Folio editions. (This entire speech is missing from the Quarto, but the fact that Salkinson has retained most of it indicates that he was working from a source text that included it.)
O, death and destruction!

It is not easy to see shameful acts before one's eyes. If you find them drawing near and approaching like an arrow in the quiver, why, you will stab both of them in their bellies.

What, then, shall I say now? What shall we do? After all, you will not be able to see their nakedness. Even if they have given themselves over to desire and their lust is the lust of goats, their heat is the heat of monkeys and their flesh is the flesh of wolves.

And they have been inflamed beyond sense, as if drunk on the wine of lust. Your eye will not be able to see them joined together. But if signs and wonders, which give evidence like witnesses, are sufficient to make a judgement, you will find them if you seek them.

I require a pure and refined test from you. So that I may know surely that she has been unfaithful to me.

This matter is not pleasing in my eyes.

119 Job 28:22 'destruction and death'.
120 Num. 25:8 'and he pierced both of them through, the Israelite and the woman through her belly' (referring to Phineas, Aaron's grandson, driving a spear through an Israelite man and Moabite woman out of disapproval at intermarriage between the two groups).
121 Neh. 9:10; similar collocations with these two nouns appear in numerous other locations in the Hebrew Bible (referring to God's signs and wonders), e.g., Exod. 7:3; Deut. 4:34.
122 Ps. 12:7 (12:6 in English Bibles) 'pure silver in an earthen furnace, refined seven times'.

119 נָמֹת וְאֵבַדּוֹן 'destruction and death'.
120 דֹּגוֹ וְאֶל־קֳבָתָּהּ וְאֶת־הָ֑אִשָּׁה יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל אִֽישׁ אֵֽת־שְׁנֵיהֶ֑ם וַיִּדְקֹר 'and he pierced both of them through, the Israelite and the woman through her belly' (referring to Phineas, Aaron's grandson, driving a spear through an Israelite man and Moabite woman out of disapproval at intermarriage between the two groups).
121 נְ֝הָרָֽיִהוּ בְּשֵׂעָרָ֑יו וּמְזֻקָּ֖ק לָאָ֑רֶץ בַּﬠֲלִ֣יל צָ֭רוּף כֶּ֣סֶף 'pure silver in an earthen furnace, refined seven times'.

122 "יתשי"
Indeed after I started to uncover disgrace.

Because my great love and faith pressured me

I shall finish that which I started.

One time at night

I was sleeping with Chesed in the bed, and because of a powerful toothache

I could not sleep. You know that there are people

Who talk in their sleep, the secrets of their heart's inclination

And Chesed is one of them. And so he called out in his sleep in my ears

‘Asenath, whom my soul loves!

Let us take sweet counsel together.

And let our love be kept secret’. After that he seized my hand

And called: ‘My darling, my beautiful one!’ And he kissed me with the kisses of his mouth

As one kisses kissing lips, and he rested his leg on my thigh

And he sighed and embraced and kissed and called out in a bitter voice

‘An evil and cruel fate gave you to the Cushite’.

I grow faint from hearing.
Indeed he did not say this, except in a dream. 

But there is no dream without some business beforehand. And such evil dreams do not speak falsely. 

And this may also be of benefit in reinforcing other tests. In order that we may rely on them, even though they be small.

I am going to tear her apart as one tears apart a kid. Do not be hasty in your spirit, lest she is faithful. And has not transgressed a holy covenant; but tell me this. Have you seen a handkerchief in her hand with woven pomegranates on it?

I gave her such a one, and it was the first gift from my hand. That was not known to me. Indeed today I noticed. That it was with a silk handkerchief which I had seen in your wife's hand. That Chesed was wiping the sweat from his face.

129 Judg. 14:6, 'and he tore it apart as one tears apart a kid' (Samson tearing apart a lion with his bare hands).

130 Dan. 11:28, 30. 

131 This word is attested in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kings 6:29, 32, 7:31), but has the meaning of 'carvings' or 'engravings'; the sense of 'weaving' in which Salkinson is using it originates in the modern period (Even-Shoshan 2003, 3: 1082).

132 Cf. Shakespeare's 'strawberries' (3.3.438). Salkinson's translation of 'pomegranates' has distinct connotations in Jewish culture. It is one of the seven fruits of the Land of Israel mentioned in Deut. 8:8, and is also frequently mentioned in the Song of Songs as well as in rabbinic literature. For example, a well-known reference (Song of Songs Rabbah 6:11) compares rows of students studying Torah to the rows of seeds in the pomegranate. Moreover, pomegranates are traditionally eaten on Rosh HaShanah, the Jewish New Year. Pomegranates also feature prominently in Jewish art, for example, the silver decorations covering the rollers on Torah scrolls are called rimmonim 'pomegranates'. See Feliks (2007) for discussion of pomegranates in Jewish tradition.
Ithiel: Was it precisely that one? –

Doeg: If it was that one, or another one which she has

Ithiel: I cannot say; it is as naught whether this one or another

Doeg: After all, it will testify against her that she is guilty.

Ithiel: If only that despicable slave

Doeg: Had many lives instead of one life

Ithiel: For one is not enough to sink my wrath into.

Now I know, Doeg, that the matter is true

And therefore I shall scatter my love to the four winds of the heavens

I shall blow upon it and it will be gone –

Come, jealous wrath! Rise up from the depths of Sheol

And fill all the chambers of my heart with hatred instead of love

And enmity instead of affection, for I have been bitten

And moreover my belly is swollen from the cruel venom of asps

Doeg: Hold your spirit in check.

Ithiel: I am thirsty, Doeg, I am thirsty for blood.

Doeg: Calm the roar of your anger, lest you regret it in the end.

Ithiel: I shall never regret it; for like the Pontic sea

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133 Dan. 8:8, 11:4 see also Zech. 2:10 for a similar phrase.
134 Deut. 32:22.
135 Num. 5:27 שְׁאוֹן הַשְּׁבֵּחַ ‘and her belly will swell’ (describing the punishment for adulterous women).
136 Deut. 32:33.
137 Somewhat unusually, Salkinson has not replaced this name with a biblical equivalent.
Flowing ahead in a stream of mighty waters\(^{138}\)
It will not rest and will not repose and will not turn back
Until it pours out in the harbour\(^{139}\) of Pont
So the flood of my spirit passes by in a burst of anger\(^{140}\)
It will not look back and will not remember youthful love
Until it is swallowed up in the rage of the great sea
That is the sea of revenge. And now, before the heavens above!

(He kneels on his knees)
I raise my hand in a curse and an oath\(^{141}\) that I shall not violate my word.

DOEG
Wait for me a bit – (He kneels as well)
You are witnesses today, bright lights of heaven!\(^{142}\)
And the earth below is a witness!
That Doeg has dedicated his life
And has given himself up with all his might to serve Ithiel zealously
And to roll away the shame from him, in everything that he commands him
And he will not pull back his hand even from spilling blood.

ITHIEL
And I also thank you, not with empty words

\(^{138}\) Exod. 15:10.  
\(^{139}\) The word used here is Elath, a proper noun denoting a port city on the Red Sea (modern-day Eilat at Israel's southern tip), mentioned in Deut. 2:8; 2 Kings 14:22, 16:6.  
\(^{140}\) Isa. 54:8.  
\(^{141}\) Neh. 10:30 (10:29 in English Bibles) וּבִשְׁבוּﬠָ֗ה בְּאָלָ֣ה ‘in a curse and an oath’.  
\(^{142}\) Ezek. 32:8.
Your love is precious in my eyes and your work shall be rewarded.\textsuperscript{143}

And now do not delay your work! Within three days.\textsuperscript{144}

Announce to me that Chesed has been cut off from the land of the living.\textsuperscript{145}

Doeg

In accordance with your word, so be it.\textsuperscript{146} – my friend Chesed is dead,

But have mercy on your wife, please have mercy and indeed let her live.

Ithiel

Destroy the cursed whore! Destroy her without mercy!

Go with me to another place so that I may obtain a weapon of destruction

In order to take the beautiful daughter of Sheol down to Sheol in blood.\textsuperscript{147}

And I make you today my officer instead of Chesed.

Doeg

I shall be your servant forever. (Exeunt)

Scene 4 (Asenath, Milcah, and the clown)

Asenath\textsuperscript{148}

Hurry, call Chesed for me, do you know his abode?\textsuperscript{149}

The Clown

I fear for my life to say that he has an abode.\textsuperscript{150}

Asenath

And why is it that you fear?

\textsuperscript{143} Jer. 31:16 ‘for your work shall be rewarded’.
\textsuperscript{144} Gen. 40:13, 19; Josh. 1:11.
\textsuperscript{145} Isa. 53:8.
\textsuperscript{146} Gen. 44:10  כָּכָרִים קְרִיתָם ‘in accordance with your words, so be it’; also Josh. 2:21.
\textsuperscript{147} 1 Kings 2:9  וַאֲנִי נִתֶּןִי ‘and you will bring his grey head in blood down to Sheol’.
\textsuperscript{148} All of the lines between this and the clown’s exit are prose in the original (3.4.1–22).
\textsuperscript{149} This word is a homonym with the additional meaning of ‘fright’.
\textsuperscript{150} See preceding note.
Because he is a soldier, and if I were to say of a soldier that he has fright, I would endanger my head.

Please don’t; indeed, where does he reside?

If I were to tell you, my lady, where he resides, I would be dealing falsely against my own life.

Is there reason and sense in this man’s words?

I do not know his residence, and if I were to say that he resides there or resides here, I would be speaking lies.

Go forth and look for his residence; ask others so that they may tell you.

I shall look in all the land, and I shall bring many questions and answers.

Go and seek him and bring him here when you find him.

Tell him that I have entreated my husband on his behalf and I shall make peace between the two of them.

This matter is not elevated beyond the limit of human wit and therefore I shall rush to do it. (Exits)

See note 149.

152 See note 149.

153 See note 149.

154 See note 149.

155 This collocation is commonly used in Hebrew to denote rabbinic responsa, i.e., the written rulings on questions regarding various aspects of Jewish law given by legal authorities. See Ta-Shma, Tal, and Slae (2007) for discussion of responsa literature.
Where did I leave my handkerchief, Milcah?

I do not know, my lady.

The loss of my handkerchief is more severe in my eyes than a bag of gold shekels.\(^{156}\)

For how easy it would be for my husband to think strange thoughts

Were he not pure-hearted\(^{157}\) and the spirit of jealousy had not come upon him.\(^{158}\)

Has the spirit of jealousy never come upon him?\(^{159}\)

God forbid, the sun in his native land

Dried out all the damp of jealousy from his bones.

Look, who's this coming over there?

I shall not relent from him until he presently restores Chessed to his position.

(To Ithiel upon his entrance) Greetings my husband, my lord!

Are you well, my love?\(^{160}\) (To himself) It is difficult to speak with a double heart.\(^{161}\)

Do you lack anything, Asenath?

I lack nothing, my lord.

Give me your hand; your hand is very soft.

It has not yet lived through many years

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\(^{156}\) Cf. Shakespeare’s ‘crusadoes’ (3.4.26), Portuguese coins marked with a cross (Crystal and Crystal 2002: 109). A shekel is a biblical weight (commonly used with reference to silver and gold) corresponding to approximately ten grams.

\(^{157}\) Ps. 24:4.

\(^{158}\) Num. 5:14 ‘and the spirit of jealousy comes upon him’; see also Num. 5:30.

\(^{159}\) Num. 5:14 ‘and the spirit of jealousy comes upon him’; see also Num. 5:30.

\(^{160}\) Song of Songs 1:9, 15, 2:2, 10, 13, 4:1, 7, 5:2, 6:4.

\(^{161}\) Psalms 12:3 (12:2 in English Bibles).
Nor many sorrows.

**Ithiel**

Therefore you are fruitful, and your spirit is a willing spirit. And your hand is hot and soft; indeed it would be better for you to be closed in. So that you might sit alone to fast, to afflict yourself, and to pray. For an unfaithful spirit has resided in you since your youth. Yet your hand is good and willing.

**Asenath**

You have spoken well. As you acquired my hand, you acquired my heart. As a sign that your hand is willing. In olden times the acquisition of the hand Preceded the acquisition of the heart. But now a hand is a hand and not a heart.

**Ithiel**

I do not know of that; but please make good on the matter That you promised me. Which matter, my dove? Why, I sent for Chesed to be summoned to come and speak with you. I have a pain in my nose, for a cold has seized me. Lend me your handkerchief.

**Asenath**

Here it is, my lord. The one that I gave you. It is not with me. It is not?

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162 Ps. 51:14 (51:12 in English Bibles).
163 Exod. 10:29.
Ithiel the Cushite of Venice

Asenath: It is not with me, my lord.

Ithiel: I consider this as a sin on your part. Indeed this handkerchief was originally given to my mother by an Egyptian witch. Who knew how to examine the kidneys and the heart with her witchcraft, And she said to my mother that as long as she kept it, she would find favour in the eyes of those who saw her and my father would be intoxicated in her love.

But if indeed she lost it, or gave it to a stranger, my father would be disgusted by her and would turn his eyes to other women. And my mother before her death gave it to me and commanded me to give it to my wife before my wedding, and so I did. Therefore take heed of its great worth, guard it like the apple of your eye.

For if it indeed gets lost and falls into the hands of strangers, you will be guilty.

Asenath: Are you speaking truly and sincerely?

Ithiel: The matter is true and sure; the weave is magic. A witch who had seen the sun two hundred times in its cycle.

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164 Jer. 11:20 לָבָ֥כֶם 'examines the kidneys and the heart' (i.e., the thoughts and mind).
165 Prov. 5:19 בְּ֝אַהֲבָתָ֗הּ 'may you always be intoxicated in her love'.
166 Zech. 2:12 (2:8 in English Bibles) כִּ֚י 'for whoever touches you touches the apple of his own eye'.
167 Judg. 9:16, 19.
When the Spirit rested upon her, sewed it and did the embroidery
And the silk was spun by worms from a holy place
And it was painted with vermilion which the Egyptian woman had prepared in her wisdom
From the hearts of virgins embalmed in the coffin.

ASENATH Why, surely you are mocking me.
ITHIEL My mouth speaks the truth; therefore take heed of its value.
ASENATH If only I had never seen your handkerchief.
ITHIEL Why then?
ASENATH Why do you speak in haste and look at me with a penetrating eye?
ITHIEL Speak; is it lost? Or is it not here in your hand?
ASENATH Save me, God in heaven, save us!
ITHIEL But speak –
ASENATH I have not lost it; but what if I had?
ITHIEL What did you say?
ASENATH I have not lost it, I say.
ITHIEL Go and bring it, so that I might see it with my eyes.
ASENATH I can do so, but I am not going to now
Because you are searching for a pretext to distance me from my desire.
Please restore your officer Chesed to his place.

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168 Num. 11:25 וַיִּֽתְנַבְּאוּ הָר֔וּחַ עַלָּם, וַיְהִ֗י 'and when the Spirit rested upon them they prophesied'.
169 Jer. 22:14 בַּשָּׁשַׁר וּמָשׁ֖וֹחַ 'and painted with vermilion'.
170 Prov. 9:7.
Bring me the handkerchief; my heart tells me evil things.

Stop it;

A better officer than him you will not find in all the land.

The handkerchief –

I want to speak about Chesed now.

The handkerchief –

Why, he is the man who has honoured your life more than gold

Your love is wonderful to him, more than any item or amulet

And in every distress and anguish he has taken his life in his hands in order to rescue you.

The handkerchief –

You are not just, I tell you...

Depart from me! (Ithiel exits)

Has the spirit of jealousy come upon this man?

I have never seen such a thing apart from today

And there must be nothing other than witchcraft in the handkerchief

I am very sorry that I lost it.

We cannot know the nature of a man in one or two years

Men are like a stomach, and we are all like a meal to them

Your love is wonderful to him, more than the love of women'.

Also Num. 5:14: ‘and the spirit of jealousy comes upon him'; also Num. 5:30.
When they are hungry they swallow us, and after they are satiated they spew us out.

But look, Chesed and my husband are coming over there.

*(Doeg and Chesed)*

**DOEG**

There is no other way, except for her to save you.

And to our salvation we have found her here; approach and beseech her.

**ASENATH**

Is there a word of news in your mouth, dear Chesed?

**CHESED**

I am going to renew my plea, intercede on my behalf, my lady.

Do not delay any longer, so that I might return to my lord.

Whom I love like my own life, and be as an ally in his house

To stand before him and serve him, as I did previously,

But if *my iniquity is too great to bear*, he will not remember my faith and service

And he will not consider my *affliction and my misery*, because he has no desire for me

Then it would be better for me to know that there is no more hope

For through this I would find new strength to sustain my spirit

I would go out and don black and seek out one of the priesthods

In whichever place I might find, to eat a crust of bread.

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176 Gen. 4:13 *מִנְּשֹֽׂאﬠֲוֺנִ֖י גָּד֥וֹל ‘*my iniquity is too great to bear’ (Cain speaking to God after killing his brother Abel).

177 Lam. 3:19.
Oh, dear-spirited Chesed! Today I would intercede in vain
My prayer would become a sin; my husband has become another man;
He is no longer my husband. If the Cushite were to change his skin

As he has changed his heart, I would no longer recognize him.
May all the angels of mercy intercede on my behalf
As I have supplicated in order to arouse his mercy for you
And I have not held back from speaking so harshly as to arouse his rage against me.
So now go wait further and I shall do everything that is in my power
For I care for you more than I care for myself.

Is the commander angry?
He left here full of anger and wrath.
Is he angry and wrathful? Indeed I have seen the cannon
Which felled a great multitude from the army of his ranks to the ground
And also snatched away his brother like a robber from his right hand
And he did not tremble and did not rage, yet now his face is angry?

Is the commander angry?
He left here full of anger and wrath.
Is he angry and wrathful? Indeed I have seen the cannon
Which felled a great multitude from the army of his ranks to the ground
And also snatched away his brother like a robber from his right hand
And he did not tremble and did not rage, yet now his face is angry?
It is indeed a matter – I shall go to him and see him,

For it is not without cause that smoke is rising from his nostrils. 181

ASENATH  Do so, my friend – (Doeg exits)

It is nothing other than reports from Venice that are alarming him

Or his spirit has suddenly been stirred up by a conspiracy of traitors on Caphtor

For so is the way of a man when others vex him

He pours out his wrath 182 and his anger on the members of his household.

In this way we know well that from a pain in the little finger

Our whole body hurts, for a man is flesh and not a god

And we cannot expect a time of love 183 every day.

Look, Milcah, I have almost become a quarrelsome woman 184

For I began to cry out that I had been wronged 185 because he had grieved me,

But now I know that the testimony of my mouth is not reliable

And I have no right to fall upon him undeservedly.

181 2 Sam. 22:9 ‘smoke rose from his nostrils’; also Ps. 18:9 (18:8 in English Bibles).

182 Jer. 10:25 ‘pour out Your wrath’; similar collocations appear in Ezek. 14:19, 20:8, 13, 21, 22:22, 30:15, 36:18; Ps. 79:6. The phrasing from Jer. 10:25 and Ps. 79:6 is also very well known from its appearance in the Passover Haggadah.

183 Ezek. 16:8.

184 Prov. 26:21 ʽand a quarrelsome man’.

185 Job 19:7 ʽI cry out that I have been wronged’. 
MILCAH If only it were as you say, that it is because of a matter of state
And not because he has let himself be fooled into becoming jealous over you.

ASENATH Oh! Indeed from me there has been no cause for his jealousy.

MILCAH A jealous man does not need a reason for his jealousy
But rather, he is jealous because he is a jealous man.
For jealousy is a worm that infests the flesh beneath it.

ASENATH My God! Save Ithiel's soul from this worm.

MILCAH Amen and amen. 186

ASENATH I'll go look for him, and you, Chesed, walk about here
And if I find him at a favourable time I shall strive with all my might
To entreat him to grant your heart's desires.

CHESED I thank the lady's kindness with the humbleness of my heart.
(Asenath and Milcah exit)

ANAH 188 Greetings Chesed, my beloved.

CHESED What has brought you here, beautiful and pleasant Anah?
Are you well? I was almost about to go to your lodgings.

Ps. 41:14 (41:13 in English Bibles), 72:19, 89:53 (89:52 in English Bibles).
Isa. 49:8.

The mother of one of Esau's wives, mentioned in Gen. 36:2, 14, 18. (Note that many interpretations of this verse, including that of the prominent medieval Jewish commentator Rashi, understand Anah to be a man.) Salkinson's motivation for selecting this name as an equivalent of Shakespeare's Bianca is unclear, as there is no obvious correspondence in meaning or sound. It is possible that he saw the shared 'an' sound in both names as a partial correspondence, and/or that he was inspired by the biblical Anah's associations with idolatry and immorality.

Ithiel the Cushite of Venice
Whereas I had set out to look for you in your residence.

I haven’t seen you for a week; seven days night and day;

A hundred and sixty-eight degrees on the sundial.

And each degree for a woman in her love is longer than a whole day.

My soul is too tired to calculate all these.

Forgive me Anah.

Great sorrows have enveloped me for the past few days.

And when I see relief, I shall turn back the sundial.

(Gives her Asenath’s handkerchief)

But take this from me and make me another one like it.

Where did you get this, Chesed?

Who gave you this, if not a new companion? You have acquired it for yourself recently.

And did she give you this handkerchief as a token of love?

Now I know the reason why you have not come to see me.

Stand back, woman –

The devil’s hand is with you in this evil slander.
For he has incited you against me and has instilled the spirit of jealousy within you.

By saying that the token is in my hand that I have entered a new covenant,

You have erred, Anah, you have erred greatly.

If so, then whose is the handkerchief?

I do not know, my daughter, for I found it in my chamber.

And its craftsmanship is very beautiful; therefore I desire

For you to make me another one based on this pattern,

Before the person who lost it comes to demand it from me.

Go and do so for me, and leave me alone.

But why must I leave you now?

Because I am waiting here to speak to the army commander

And he will not regard it in my favour if he sees a woman at my right hand.

Why do you think such a thing?

It is not because my love for you has departed that I think such a thing.

This is the matter, that your love for me has departed from your heart;

But lead me on the way a little and say whether you will see me in the evening.

I shall lead you a little distance; I shall not go far from here.
And if nothing stops me, I shall come to dinner.

The word of your mouth is good; it has calmed my heart.

I know that a woman like me is only good in her time.

(Both exit)

End of Third Part.

192 In the Hebrew these two lines form a rhyming couplet, which lacks a parallel in Shakespeare’s single-line statement ‘Tis very good; I must be circumstanced’ (3.4.202).