

“WEDDING SONG”

A PLAY BY SAM GRABER

ESTIMATED RUN TIME – 10 MINUTES

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## **SUMMARY**

A groom is transported by an ancient song during the first dance at his wedding reception.

## **CHARACTERS (1M, 1F)**

GROOM, a guy in a tux

SONGKEEPER, a woman of ancient song

## **TIME**

The present.

## **SETTING**

A dance floor at the Holiday Inn.

## **FIRST PERFORMANCE**

*Wedding Song* was first performed at the Fairmont festival in April 2011, as directed by Joey Madia, and with the following cast: GROOM – Joey Madia; SONGKEEPER – Tonya Madia.

*Wedding Song* received its first full run May 2017 at the Phoenix Theater in Minneapolis, MN as part of the Arts Nest show *Love, Tonight*, as produced by Jenna Papke, staged managed by Meesh Morris, directed by Maureen Bourgeois, featuring original compositions by McKenzie Alexander Boyle, and with following cast: GROOM – Mike Hentges; SONGKEEPER – Christine Pietz.

## **THE PLAY**

### SONGKEEPER

My name resides in no man’s tongue yet I know when I am called. And so it was on the fourth day past the rising of the slender moon when I was woken from respite and harkened to the lowland grounds for matrimony of a King to his intended Queen bride.

### GROOM

Ever feel a part of something that wasn’t yours? Well, that’s me. My situation. Today is the Big Day. Except I’m not getting married. I’m getting *weddinged*.

### SONGKEEPER

Of unknown time I have dwelled in the high mountain caves, where I have served as keeper of the ancient song.

### GROOM

Before I proposed she said she was interested in a small affair. Immediate family. Couple friends. Then I put the ring on and BAM. Five hundred people, most of whom I don’t even know.

### SONGKEEPER

It is a song of love, immeasurable in scope, a talisman of eternal happiness, and all those who live in sight of the mountains pray for its sounding at the marriage altar.

### GROOM

The planning for our wedding? Out of control. Flowers, centerpieces, chair coverings, dessert buffets, ridiculously expensive costumes that get worn once. The same planning as every wedding. See, the problem was: I wanted something special. Something unique. Something that would only be me and her. I told her if all we do is the same routine as everybody else’s wedding then taking these vows is just going to seem, well, routine.

### SONGKEEPER

It was foretold by the stars, twinkling angels in twilight disguise, who whispered to me that under the elm tree by the lowland shores a royal wedding will take place and my ancient song shall be sung.

### GROOM

So I said: music. You got everything else. Let me pick the music. And it won’t be the same old lovey-dovey songs to give everyone that Hallmark Channel feeling. I want to give our wedding a touch of sizzle.

SONGKEEPER

Borne by moorish winds I glide in silence from the high mountain caves. I creep among the river lowlands, through the tall reeds.

GROOM

At the ceremony? The processional as we're walking down the aisle? This killer 70's retro-group my cousin started: Disco Funkenstein. And the reception? I will book us the greatest trip-zydeco rap ensemble the world has ever heard. Music.

SONGKEEPER

Half the countryside stands before the raised dais. The King wears a crown of roses. His Queen bride festooned in ethereal white flax, the sun's itinerant streaks brightening her cherishing smile.

GROOM

Of course the band she wanted was, are you ready?, the Love Me Tenders. The same lovey-dovey band that everyone else books for their wedding.

SONGKEEPER

It is not known if I will come until called upon by the King himself. He turns towards the mountain, invoking my ritual prayer, calling for my song to bless him and his Queen bride, sealing forever their fate in happiness.

GROOM

I realize that today's weddings are about the bride. I get that. But aren't marriages about the bride *and* groom?

SONGKEEPER

The King lifts his crown of roses, revealing the momentous paradox of hopeful smile and fearful eye. And half the countryside, there by the river, stands petrified in wonder, not knowing whether I will arrive to forge matrimony by my ancient melody.

GROOM

So the ceremony went fine, with the same old sappy songs played by soft organ, and at the reception we get announced to the dance floor for the first time as Husband and Wife while *Wind Beneath My Wings* is played by...the Love Me Tenders. The women are taking pictures, tearing up. All my buddies are holding up their beers from the cash bar, sorry. My wife and I start the first dance. The same old slow dance to the same old slow song that everyone gets for the first dance at their wedding...and that's when the whole thing happened.

SONGKEEPER

It is a melody born beneath the African sands, stirred in the heat of deserts, cooled by oceans, lengthened by the two ends of the earth, seasoned by centuries of stormy air.

GROOM

This is going to sound crazy.

SONGKEEPER

It is made by voice and yet not of voice. It speaks messages without words. It has never before been heard yet cannot be mistaken.

GROOM

But I didn't hear the music from the Love Me Tenders. Instead I heard what sounded like...a melody. A woman's voice. From inside my head, another time, a different part of history. It was like nothing I've heard before.

SONGKEEPER

The King begins to sway.

GROOM

And I wasn't standing anymore on the dance floor at the Holiday Inn. Surrounding me and my wife was a petal of moonlight. All we could see was our feet contained by this moonlight, which was the first step of a bridge. And over the bridge was where the melody was coming. Together, towards the melody, we went.

SONGKEEPER

The wedding song is unweighted by dimension, a bridge to the chasm of discovery.

GROOM

We came to a land of valley and volcano. The valley was rich with wild flowers and verdurous grass. At the basin of the valley sat a volcano, its peak emitting rainbows that tumbled down slippery rock, kissed the valley floor and careened over distant hills. My new wife and I swam in its hot springs. We dried under fig trees. And when the cooling wind caressed the valley floor we borrowed heat from fireflies. This strange land with its eternal song. In the morning we rose to its verse and in the evening we rejoiced to its chorus. And we talked about things that had not before been spoken. My bride and I talked of hope and trust. We talked of acceptance and dreams. We lived there for what seemed like many years.

SONGKEEPER

But my melody cannot stay the same forever. The listener must be changed by its entrancement, or the song loses meaning.

GROOM

After some time the song changed. We knew it was time to journey on. So my bride and I left the valley and climbed the crags of the volcano and walked to its reaching rainbow. Through beckoning air we ascended, past prisms of indigo, above cerulean clouds, until we came to a gleaming ship. On the deck of this sky-ship were crystal creatures running about, speaking in breathless language of song. They called us aboard and welcomed us. Under the unfurling of golden sails the ship moved past the sapphire dusk, settling its daily conflict with the ethereal horizon. Between sun and moon, drums beat below decks and the ancient song began anew. My wife and I sang freely, of tolerance and growth, of empathy and compassion, of the shared emotions that make two people one. We were forever bound on a crusade of intimacy as the golden-sailed ship soared past lightning and its passionate air that carried no temperature and made us neither cool nor warm.

SONGKEEPER

The song is manifested by unnatural wavelength. It is a calling and a leaving all at once. Its danger is to be only for itself.

GROOM

We sailed under stars and for the first time saw infinite space. The shipmen said man and wife are not to traverse the endless quantum of space, that to go there is to be lured towards the rings of infinity which man and wife must conquer in their own time. But by now the melody became maddening. I begged the shipmen, take us there, we must go there. So the sky-ship broke from earth cloud towards space. Faster we sailed past distrustful galaxies, drawn by reckless force towards nebula fires. The shipmen pleaded for me to abandon but I could not. My bride's hand ripped from mine. And entering the rings of infinity the melody ended, and in its place the melody became grotesque, burnishing my ears with anger, roaring rage. I could not sing anymore. The ship broke apart, the golden sails torn by galactic maelstrom. Then screaming, all of us screaming, falling into blackness. I was falling. Then silence.

SONGKEEPER

The King sways again, as if returning from a long voyage.

GROOM

I'm back on the Holiday Inn dance floor. My wife and I are holding each other. I sense people around us, looking at us. But there's still only me and her. I look at my wife. And I know.

SONGKEEPER

If my song had words it would be this.

GROOM

Marriage is the song that never ends.

SONGKEEPER

I leave the King to his new Queen. I return to the mountain caves. And there shall dwell  
until called again.

GROOM

Each year on our anniversary my wife and I make some popcorn, cuddle on the couch  
and watch our wedding video. And each year, when we get to the part with the first  
dance, I turn up the volume. On screen my wife and I hold each other close, swaying to  
the band. But I swear, there's this one moment, when the band goes silent, and I can hear,  
ever so faint, the outline of an ancient song that I shall never know of or sing again.

**END OF PLAY.**