



## *Permission! Permission!*

*(The Above to be sung to the tune of: Tradition! Tradition!)*

### Children's & Purim Presentations:

This presentation has been designed for use with Children's presentations (and for Purim).

I am allowing royalty free use of this work to promote my plays (hopefully some people will want to do the full version), so that young actors may develop their craft, and so churches and synagogues may teach the wonderful story of Esther.

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If a program is created please list my name, contact and copyright information, so that interested people can take a look at my other plays.

Please send me pictures, video links/MP3s, and comments to add to the web site. Also, please consider saying a prayer for me, as getting new plays produced is a struggle.

Dennis L. Dunn

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### Mutter, Mutter, Mutter

Just as my Mordi mutters about Haman getting the pastry named after him, I mutter about the songs that aren't in this version. So many good scenes . . . cut so we can get done quick. Please consider expanding the play (if you get the chance) to add songs such as *Women!*, *It's So Wonderful Being Me!*, and *I've Never Felt Like This Before*.

DLD

### Optional Sections

In reviewing the play you'll notice that the first three scenes have portions that say "optional" (or "cut", if time doesn't allow). This is because, while I want to introduce our heroine and show her fall in love with the king, it's more important to get to the heart of the story. So, if time is short (*e.g.*, a Children's Church performance), forget the introductions, go right to King's Party and reduce the opening sections – they aren't critical.

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**Author's Note (Please Read):**

*In a Biblically based novel I found the following note:*

*"The Bible is poetry. As such, it is subject to multiple interpretations."*

*Please enjoy my interpretation, while developing your own.*

*Dennis L. Dunn*

**Synopsis**

The King of Persia is ticked. His beautiful wife won't come when he calls. So he divorces her. (The king's a bit spoiled.) His counselors are worried: *What if all the women learned they could tell off their husbands?* Ut Oh. The foundations of society would crumble. Their fun and games restricted. They suggest the King divorce his queen and hold a contest to pick a new queen. (Song: *Keep Our Women in Line*)

Esther, a Jewish orphan raised by her cousin "Uncle" Mordi, is picked as a contestant. She'd rather marry a nice Jewish boy, but the law's the law. She has to go. Esther charms the King and wins the pageant.

On the advice of Mordi she conceals her Jewish heritage.

Shortly after Esther becomes Queen, Mordi learns of a conspiracy to kill the King. He tells Esther. She tells the palace guards. They arrest the conspirators and the plot is foiled. (Yea!)

Years pass. Haman, an enemy of the Jews, becomes second in command to the King. Uncle Mordi refuses to bow to this enemy. Now Haman is ticked. (He's spoiled, too.) Haman decides to kill Mordi and every Jew in the kingdom and gets the King to sign it.

Mordi beseeches Esther to go to the King and plead for her people. But the King's interest in Esther has waned. She hasn't seen him in a month. To show up unannounced and uninvited may result in death. (They didn't get many party crashers.)

But Esther courageously goes anyway. Not wanting to tip her hand as to what's wrong, she invites the King and Haman to a series of banquets. Before the night of the second banquet the King can't sleep. To fight insomnia he has the royal records read. He learns that Mordi had saved his life. The King decides Mordi should be honored.

The tables are turned. Haman is given the job of honoring the man he sought to kill.

Esther reveals the treat to her life and the lives of her people at the second banquet. The King changes his mind. The villain is foiled and all (other than Haman) pretty much live happily ever after.

## Songs: Act 1

<b>Song</b>	<b><u>Singers</u></b>
<b>1. Hear O Israel *</b>	Cast, Mordi, Esther, Haman, Esther's Friends
<b>2. Keep Our Women in Line*</b>	King, Men
<b>3. The Man of My Dreams*</b>	Esther
4. God Uses People Like You	Mordi, Esther
5. Where Have all the Good Girls Gone <i>(Short, intentionally lousy folk song)</i>	Minstrel
6. I Never Felt Like this Before <i>(I've got an appendicitis -- just kidding)</i>	King, Esther, Hagai
7. I Remember You	Mordi, Esther, Women
8. A Peach of a Queen	Esther, Mordi, Palace Staff
<b>9. A Government Job*</b>	<b>Haman, Henchman</b>
<b>10. God Have You Deserted Me*</b>	<b>Mordi, Cast</b>

## Songs: Act 2

<b>12. God Will Save His People*</b>	<b>Esther, Mordi</b>
13. Satan's Servants	Haman, Henchman, Female Cast
<b>15. This Could be the Day I Die*</b>	<b>Esther, Cast</b>
16. It's So Wonderful Being Me	Haman, Zee, Cast
17. Killin' the Jew <i>(50's wantabee)</i>	Zee, Haman, Haman's "Friends"
18. Women!	King
<b>19. The King's Lament *</b>	<b>King, King's Servants</b>
20. Killin' the Jew <i>(reprise)</i>	Zee, Haman, Haman's "Friends"
21. The Man of My Dreams <i>(reprise)</i>	Esther
<b>22. God Will Save His People (Closing) <i>(reprise)</i></b>	<b>Cast</b>

\* Portions of bolded songs contained within short program

## Scene #1

*NOTES: This version of the play is intended as a "Children's Edition" suitable for Children's Church or puppets. Because the original story begins with what amounts to a drunken college party -- with the king demanding his wife show up in a compromised way -- it has been sanitized, more censoring may be necessary.*

*Language can be adjusted for the audience. You are encouraged to use more mature language, longer scripts, and more songs for Purim or full presentations.*

*Mordi Enters.*

*(Narrating)*

Mordi: Hello, my name, is Mordecai -- you can call me, Mordi.  
I am a Jew, part of God's chosen people.

*(Off-stage)*

Voice #3: Chosen for the dung heap. Idiot Jew! *(Derisive snicker)*

*(Shrug)*

Mordi: Some are less thrilled with this choosing than others. Being part of the Chosen People is not all peaches and cream, or even milk and honey.

We have our enemies. Millions of Jews have been murdered over the centuries. Most recently with the Holocaust in Europe.

But I'd like to tell you about a Holocaust that *didn't* happen.

Why not? Well, partly because of my cousin, Hadassah -- or Esther, to you. She was just a teenager when it started.

***(IF TIME SHORT, GO TO SECOND LINE OF SCENE #2)***

*(Lights on Esther and her "friends". Guy may walk buy and trip into tree.)*

*(Giggling.)*

Friend #1: Esther, did you see the way Samuel was looking at you?

Friend #2: And Peter and Paul and . .

Esther: Come on, they're just being friendly.

Friend #3: Yeah . . right.

Friend #2: Esther, half the guys in the village are ga-ga over you . . .

Friends #3: They're all mooning . .

Friend #2: and swooning . .

Friend #1: walking into trees . .

Esther: Naaww . . .

Friend #1: . . but were not jealous . . we're happy for you . .

Friend #2: Comeon, is there a guy you like?

*(intro on music starts)*

Esther: I don't know. I'm not sure I want to even stay here. I've always dreamed of changing the world. I don't really want stuff . . just to . . do something for God.

Friend #2: Amazing . . . you could have your pick . . and . . well . . more for us!

Friend #1: Yeah!

*(They Exit; Esther looking after them)*

### ***Esther's Lullaby***

Esther: I love singing the Torah,  
the stories of old,  
of Rachel and Hannah,  
and Deborah, so bold.

And I've found as I'm dreaming  
of what I'll become,  
that I long to share His love,  
to tell everyone. . .

Of my God who rescued Isaac,  
and parted the sea.  
Of my God who answers prayers  
and cares for people like me.

How I long to make a difference,  
sometime in my life,  
I want to do more than  
just be someone's wife.

Oh God, could you use me,  
to touch the world?  
Oh God, could you use,  
just an ordinary girl?

*(Esther exits, King and his friends enter.)*

## Scene #2

Mordi: You will get your chance, little Hadassah.

Now, as our story starts, King Ahasuerus -- or Xeres, had a big party.

And it wasn't a very nice party either -- there was too much drinking and stuff like that.

Servant #1: Wow, Your Majesty, Delta House has nothing on you!

Servant #2: Yeah, what's it been ... seven days of root beer, women and song?

King: *(Hic")* What's that? Ya know, there aren't any girls here -- that's what we need --  
*(slams mug of "beer" on table)*  
somebody to bake us cookies and get the root bear!  
Let's get my wife out here? Huh? Guard, tell my wife to "Come on down!"

*(Servant #2 exits)*

Guy #1: Yeah! She's a cutie, your Majesty.

*(Servant returns, looking worried, sound's a little like Wally Cox, may use falsetto and gulp in places.)*

Servant #2: Um, you majesty, your wife won't be coming. . . She sent a note.

King: I'm a little tipsy right now. You read it!

*(sweating, wipes forehead, gulps, voice may crack)*

Servant #2: I really think you should read it, your Majesty . .

King: I said "Read it"! Read it or die!

Servant #2: Uh. . . Yes, your majesty:

"Your Highness, Are you a knuckleheaded baboon? Of course I won't come there. Idiot! All the men are drunk. They're rude and crude on a good day. Now they'll be worse. I don't want to be ogled at by a drunken mob. Stick this idea in your royal ear.

Sincerely yours,  
Vashti"

King: What! She defies me? That wench! I'll burn her in oil! I'll hang her by her thumbs! I'll send her to bed without her supper. That's what I'll do! Advisors, what should be done with such a woman?

Advisor #1: Make her eat spinach and liver for dinner for the next 20 years!

All: EEEWWW.

Advisor #2: And listen to opera!

King: Harsh. . Well, something has to be done!

### **Keep Our Woman in Line**

(King)  
Is she crazy or delirious,  
I admit I quite furious,  
she treats my request as spurious?  
How do I keep this woman in line?

(Group of Advisors)  
Feed'er broccoli and cauliflower --  
castor oil at every hour.  
Let her know who has all the power!

King (optional): (That would be me!; OR That's me!; OR: Me! Me! Me!)  
And we'll keep our women in line!

(Children's or Matinee Version):  
(group or solo)  
To listen to girls  
would be awful dumb!  
Guy #1 Guy #2 Guy #3  
They cry. They tattle. They're no fun.

(King)  
How should I treat her? What must be done?  
To keep her under my thumb.

Adult Version:  
(Group or solos)  
To give in women  
would be awful dumb,  
Guy #1 Guy #2 Guy #3  
No drinking, carousing, No having fun!

(Advisors)



Here is what we propose,  
Queen Vashti should be deposed.  
Toss her out on her highbrow nose.  
Find a woman who'll stay in line!  
King: (That's fine!)

Solo or Group:  
Set a precedent for history!  
Fight against social anarchy!  
Better be careful or on bended knee,  
we'll be bowing to some Hillary!  
Men: (No! No! No!)  
Gotta keep our women in line!  
Men: (Yes! Yes!)

*Interlude:*

Men:	King:
From the tombs of Tutankamen	From the tombs of Tutankamen
to the Himalayan hills,	to the Himalayan hills,
Every subject and satrap	Every Subject and satrap (Satrap: "sa-trap")
does according to your will.	does according to MY will.

Advisor #2: I think we have a consensus your majesty: Vashti should be removed from office.  
Another should take her place!

***(Below is Optional)***

King: Good idea! Now where were we?

Guy #1: It's your turn . . .

Guy #2: OK, got any 3s?

King: Ha! Go Fish!

### Scene #3

**NOTE: THIS SCENE MAY BE OMITTED IF TIME IS SHORT**

*(Mordi steps back on stage, this is done side stage so that props for Scene #3 can remain on stage)*

Mordi: Now as you can see, the king wasn't the most mature man in the kingdom. He could be cruel and impulsive -- especially after a drink or two . . . or five.

So the edict went out throughout the kingdom to bring the most beautiful woman before the king.

My cousin, Esther, got the letter.

*(Esther enters)*

Esther: Oh, no, Uncle Mordi. I got the letter! "Greeting from the King. . ." I have to report to the palace tomorrow! Oh, Uncle Mordi! I always wanted to marry a nice Jewish boy.

Mordi: Are you sure this is so bad?

**OPTIONAL PORTION THAT INCLUDES SONG EXCERPT – Time APPROX. 1:20**

Esther: How can you say that? Away from my family? My friends? Worshipping God in secret? Never able to have one man to whom I alone am special?

I'll never be really married. Never be able to be loved by a man who cares just for me. Oh, Uncle Mordi . . .

## The Man of My Dreams

A harem's a prison  
I don't want to live in  
the job is a royal pain.

It's not much of a plan  
to share my man  
during all of his royal reign.

Oh, the man of my dreams  
I'd be his queen,  
he'd hold me in his arms so tight --  
when I talked, he'd listen,  
and his eyes would glisten,  
how I long for the man of my dreams.

### END OPTIONAL TEXT/SONG

Mordi           Sweetheart, remember when you were a little girl, you'd pretend to be a princess --  
why not a queen? -- maybe this is your big chance.

Esther:       Well, maybe if I was queen, OK, I'd *love* that!  
But what chance do I have? There will be hundreds of girls competing. And I don't  
know court customs . . . How can I win?

Mordi:       Well, don't be just another pretty face. Show your brains.  
Be deferential . . . don't go trying to correct him.

Esther:       Like, after Vashti, I couldn't figure that out. I mean, Unc, does any man like being  
corrected?

Mordi:       Umm . . . Good point.

## Scene #4

*(In the throne room, the king is on his throne)*

*(Narrating)*

Mordi: So Esther took part in the "pick a queen competition."

*(Play theme music from the Dating Game or Where Have All the Good Girls Gone.)*

*(droning)*

Servant #4: OK, move along, move along. Everyone gets a chance to audition to be Queen.  
*(3 to 5 women, including Esther, get in line).*

Next! *(first woman advances)*

*(King is bored out of his tree. Bach #353 will do a lot of physical contortions in her presentation, may use a nasal voice or Valley Girl style, may be ad libbed, depending on the cadence)*

King: Bachelorette #353, Where did you grow up?

Bach #353: Ummm ... Grow up? Well, it was in like a city...Something with a B. I think. . . like Barcelona? Burbank? Babylon? Yeah that was it, Babylon. We had like these goats and sheep and those horses with these big humpity things.

**(OPTIONAL)** *to audience if kids are in the front rows, they can be primed before hand):*

Oh, no what were those things called? Do you know? *(Kids: "Camels")* What was that? *(Kids: "Camels")* Oh, yeah, that's right -- Camels, wow, you're smart!

King: *(If kids not used)* Camels?

Bach #353: Yeah, that's it, camels! They could sure drink a lot of water.

King: Next! Eye -- yi -- yi, can't we get a nice, unspoiled girl?  
Someone with common sense.

Servant #4: There is one more lady who awaits today, your Majesty.

*(Esther enters)*

King: *(Under his breath.)* Another day, another bimbo. *(May substitute: "Ditzy blond".)*  
*(Dismissively.)* Come in.

*(She enters.)*

*(curtsies or bows)*

Esther: Thank you, your majesty.

King: What's your name?

*(nervously)*

Esther: Esther, your majesty.

*(He smirks.)*

King: Don't be scared, miss. Now, let me guess, your parents were rich?

Esther: My parents died when I was young.

King: I'm . . . I'm sorry.

Esther: Well, my cousin raised me. *(proudly)* He's a great man.

King: I see. Now, why should you be queen?

Esther: I'm not really sure I should. . . I'm not a princess, in spite of what they say. And I want to know so much. I ask entirely too many questions. . .

King: I see. *(under his breath)*. . . Humm . . . not spoiled . . . humble . . . inquisitive . . .

Now, tell me, if you get the job, what would like for a wedding present? You could have anything – a villa?, a shopping spree? – *anything* up to half my kingdom!

Esther: -- Really?!?

King: Of course not -- it's an expression. Politics 101: "Promises you don't intend to keep!"

Esther: Oh, well . . . I've seen the long lines to see the king . . . It's hot out there . . . people might think their government doesn't care . . .

King: But I don't care! . . . *(catching himself)* um .. about the cost . . . uh, go on . . .

Esther: Well, I'd like to request that we give out chocolate chip cookies and lemonade – or milk -- to the people in line -- in the name of the king, of course – so they know you think of them . . .

King: You can have anything and you want . . . chocolate chip cookies?!?

Esther: If that isn't too much . . . we should care about the people. Be public servants . . .

King: Humm . . . what a novel thought . . . it'll never catch on . . . but good P.R. . .  
Esther, you're smart, you care about people. And I think you've got a future in public relations. You've got the job. I'm naming you as the new queen!

Oh, I love it when I'm decisive!

## Scene #5

Mordi: So, it was that Esther became queen. There was celebrating though out the kingdom – the free cookies and drinks might have had something to do with that.

Now, I told Esther to keep it quiet about being a Jew, so she never told anyone.

Shortly after Esther became queen, I was working near the palace when I heard men arguing.

*(Men enter, stage left, voice should be old villains, think Peter Lorrie for Guard #1 and James Cagney for Guard #2.)*

Rebel Guard #1: I told you it had to be tonight. *(Shows dagger.)*

Rebel Guard #2: Are you crazy? He'll be heavily guarded tonight.

Rebel Guard #1: Well, OK. But tomorrow! We've got to put a dagger in that cruel, blundering fool of a king! If not tonight, tomorrow!

Rebel Guard #2: Quiet, haven't I told you to never mention that the king is the one we seek to kill! Look over there, that man heard you!

Rebel Guard #1: What does it matter? He's just a dumb Jew. He can't -- or won't -- tell anyone.

Rebel Guard #2: Perhaps, but let's get out of here.

*(Narrating)*

Mordi: Little did they know of my relationship with Esther. I sent a message to Esther who informed the police and the guards were arrested.

*(If enough actors available Guards 3 and 4 and 5 haul off the conspirators, dragging them across the stage; otherwise just have one or two guards below leading them on)*

Guard #3: Come on you dirty rebels. Get a move on it. The gallows await you.

Rebel Guard #1: No, No. I didn't do it. It was the butler. Yeah, the butler did it!

Rebel Guard #2: And my dog ate the plot!

Guard #4: So there was a plot! We've got you, scum.

Rebel Guard #1: Idiot!

Rebel Guard #2: You shouldn't call people idiots. Mom said!

*(they are drug off; continuing narration)*

Mordi: So a report was placed in the royal record.

Royal Record Person

*(former Bachelorette #353):*

*(with a notebook and pencil comes across stage talking VERY fast)*

OK . . . June 5 . . . the King got his nails clipped -- he had a hangnail -- which gave him an idea he used later that day . . . and, it was like reported by Mordecai the Jew that somebody wanted to kill the king, see. And there was like a royal investigation and stuff like that. And, after being subjected to tickling and opera music, they confessed.

And the guys who did the bad stuff got their just desserts. They asked for meatloaf and sauerkraut for their last meal -- which was really stupid if you ask me -- I would have asked for ice cream 'cause then they'd have to wait for the ice cream man and he doesn't, like, you know, come until August.

Mordi: You know, you look familiar . . .

*(perky)*

Record Keeper: Oh -- I'm so glad you noticed -- that's because I used to be like a real celebrity. I was a finalist for the "pick a queen" competition. But the other girl could sing -- and she won the talent contest. . . . Anyway I've got to file these records today .... *(to herself)* should it be filed under G or J for June? Ummm. . . Definitely a G!

## Scene #6

*(Narrating)*

Mordi: Now you might think that if you save the king's life you might get a promotion -- a parade, maybe a medal. But the record got overlooked.

Years passed.

And an evil man -- Haman -- got promoted to second in command. He even got his own pastry -- a Hamantashen -- named after him.

See that's the way it works sometimes in government. You do something good, someone else gets the promotion . . . someone else gets the pastry named . . . I tell you would a Mordistashen be so hard to bake? But nooooooooo . . . *(May exit muttering . . . or recover again)* . . . there, is no justice sometimes. *(louder)* Not that I'm annoyed. *(under his breath)* that would be beneath me . . .

*(Next line optional depending how play presented)*

Oh, and get ready to boo, Haman's finally about to come out.

*(Haman and the king enter) (Haman is the classic Melodrama Black Villain, the audience should be prompted to Boo whenever he appears on stage and cheer for Esther. King's costume has shoulder pads with tassels.)*

Haman: Oh, your Majesty, your eminence -- I sooo appreciate your appointing me as Second in Command. You could not have made a better choice.

King: Right you are, Haman. Delegation! It's the secret of good government!

Haman: Really?

King: Of course. You have to find people with skills and give them the freedom to do their jobs. For instance, you've got a knack for money.

Haman: Yes! I love it!

King: So, you're in charge of the Treasury.

Haman: I do sooo love collecting taxes.

King: Hummmm *(Shrugs or raises eyebrows)*. . . Well, to each their own.

I, on the other hand, am a military man. The most pressing needs of our kingdom are protecting and expanding our borders. Those Greeks are rather bothersome.



Haman: . . . shame about the Armada.

King: Yes. . well . . the sun got in our eyes . . it was only 300 ships. Anyway, I act as Commander and Chief.

Haman: And a very good one you are . .

King: Thank you. The troops must see their king! It inspires confidence!

Haman: Indeed, sire! It's almost as good as winning. (*Panicky look as Haman realizes what he said.*)

King: Ah, yes . . (*King looks a little annoyed, eyes Haman.*)  
Plus, I look good in uniform.

Haman: Oh, absolutely, those uniforms are very smart.

King: It's the shoulder pads . . designed 'em myself.

Haman: You do look good.

King: Chicks dig it. Works well for football players, too.

Haman: Indeed! Oh, and your Majesty... A little trifling matter, too. Before you go, since I am now second in command, please sign this order to have all bow down to me . . . except you, of course.

King: Umm . . . well, appearances do matter . . you must be respected . . whatever . .

(*King signs the proclamation*)

King: Well, I don't want to be late. (*King starts to exits.*)

Haman: Don't worry, your Majesty, you can count on me. . .

(*King Exits*)

You can count on me to take all I can get.

Now -- this is just what I've always wanted. To have people bow before me, me, me and only me. While the king's away I will play. I'll be rich, rich, rich. Oh, hold it. I'm already rich. I'll be richer, richer, rich rich rich. (*cackle*) Yes! (*Yes is optional.*)

(*Haman exits---Mordi comes back on stage with extras around him start coming in to form a crowd.*)

*(Narrating)*

Mordi: Haman was now second to the king. When he went before the crowds people had to bow before him. But, I decided I would never bow before such an evil man. . .  
*(muttering, under his breath)* gets his own pastry. .

*(Crowd enters around Mordi. Haman enters stage left in a haughty fashion. If possible have a cart to push Haman, to be used again for Mordecai later. Crowd all bows. Mordi defiantly refuses to bow, may read a newspaper. Haman glares. Mordi glares back. Haman glares some more. Mordi glares back. Haman leaves kicking something and leaves hopping in pain.)*

Guy #1: Why didn't you bow? Don't you know of the king's edict?

Mordi: I will only bow to my God.

*(Incredulous throughout)*

Guy #1: You guys always were a little weird. I think you're making a mistake. Haman nurses grudges.

Mordi: To bow before such a man would be a bigger mistake. I will trust my God.

Guy #1: Sure, Bub. . .

*(Crowd and Mordi exit - Haman comes in limping, followed by 2 servants)*

Haman: Did you see that!

Servant #3: See a gnat? *(Looks around in the air)* Do we need a fly-swatter?

Haman: Clean out your ears, idiot. Did you see that Jew? Mordecai. He refuses to bow. To me. The greatest, most powerful man in the Kingdom!

Servant #4: I'm not sure the king would agree with that.

Haman: I am the brains behind the throne.

Servant #3: . . uh, he's a Jew, Sir . . So, are you going to let him get away with it?

*(Sarcastic repetition - payback)*

Haman: He's a Jew, Sir --

He's a Jew. Well, maybe all the Jews should pay!

Maybe this is why I'm so rich! To enjoy the luxury of revenge!

Servant #3: Sir, what does rich have to do with it?

Haman: Haven't I taught you anything? Of course, not. Because you're an idiot.

The secret of wealth in government is to write laws and taxes to benefit yourself!

All you have to do is just use part of the taxes that they thought were going to needless, worthless projects like roads and schools and hospitals. Use it for yourself! Build bigger palaces and yachts and enjoy guilty pleasures -- like revenge!

Let me explain:

### **A Government Job** (Haman's Song)

When I was boy and went to school  
I never lived by the Golden Rule.  
I bullied kids to get my way,  
and cheated at the games I played,

(They said,)

"Kid, you've got intellect,  
but your ethics are a bit suspect  
there's not a lot things you can do, (or: there's not a lot things **that** you can do,)  
but here's one career that's made for you . . .

*(Haman – Henchman may join)*

(Ya gotta)  
Get yourself a Government job,  
where you can cheat and you can rob  
write the rules that are right for you,  
take a cut, take a cut, or two  
Do, do, do!

Now, this is a truth I must admit  
some government guys are legit  
take that Jew Mordecai,  
he won't steal and he won't lie,

Mordecai, he must die!  
die, die, die, die, DIE!

*(Haman may jump up & down  
like 5 year old having a tantrum)*

*(Henchman – Haman may join)*

(Ya gotta)  
Get yourself a Government job,  
where you can cheat and you can bob  
If you're made, don't ya pout,  
just pass a law and wipe him out!

(Cackle)

And so I've hatched a wonderful, evil plan.  
To rid the Jews from all the land.  
I'll write law from the King's command.  
Kill the Jews! That's my plan!

*(end with evil laugh/cackle)  
lead to asthma attack and "hee-haw" of donkey)*

Small Child: *(To his mother)* Mommy, he needs a time-out.

### Scene #7

*King Enters, with servants, Haman follows with Notebook, his voice should slither)*

*(Narrating)*

Mordi: A few days later, Haman met with the King.

King: OK, let's see, I've got the military review at 10 . . lunch at the hanging gardens . . . I do hope they haven't had . . . bothers the digestion. . and then *another* military review. Sheesh . . Oh, Haman, what do you have for me today?

Haman: Your majesty, just a few trifling things. First, there's the matter of the irrigation project on the Tigris river and then there's raising taxes. .

King: Again?

Haman: 'fraid so . . don't worry . . I know where the money's going . . and a little problem with one of the peoples . .

King: I was unaware of any such problem, what is it?

Haman: Well, I've afraid it's very serious your majesty -- very serious indeed. There is a certain people -- a strange people, your Majesty, very strange --

King: How strange?

Haman: Ever seen a *Star Trek* convention?

King: Yes . . *(king recoils)* NO!?!

Haman: It's true. Geeks and freaks, your Majesty. Even . . . actors!

King: No!

Haman: . . Now these people are scattered among all the peoples of the kingdom. Their customs are different. Their laws are different. And their noses . .

King: Different?

Haman: Prominently so.

King: But don't we support diversity? I could'a sworn it was in my last speech.

Haman: Oh, your Majesty! Conformity is the *new* diversity. Gotta keep up with the times.

King: Oh . .

Haman: And so I'm afraid that it isn't in the king's interest to let these people get away with it any longer. So, we should issue a decree to destroy them, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the treasury for this decree. . .

King: You're sure this needs to be done?

Haman: Very sure. Oh -- look at the time -- if the troops don't see you soon, they'll be soooooo disappointed.

*(Dismissively)*

King: Good point. And, well . . whatever . . take my ring. And keep the money . . .

Haman: Thank you your majesty. You are very generous. Let's do lunch. I've got BLT sandwiches: Baloney, Limburger and Tabasco!

King: Uh. . . maybe after the review . . next month . .

*(King exits)*

*(Haman turns to audience in sing-song/spoiled brat chant.)*

Haman: YES! I get to keep the money! I get to keep the money!

And -- even better -- I get to draft a decree that will destroy all the Jews and that accursed Mordecai!

*(Haman Exits)*

## Scene #8

*Set: Courtyard.*

*(Group of Jews Re-enter. Decree is nailed to wall.)*

Person #1: What's that say?

Person #2: It's a royal decree!

Person #1: What is it, Passover? A chariot race?

Person #2: Oh no! We're to be destroyed, killed and annihilated.

"Greetings to the nations! At the end of the year, all of the Jews are to be destroyed and annihilated. Everyone is subject to death!"

Person #1: And there's more:

"All who wish to join in taking part in this plan for the destruction of the Jews are to be able to take over the homes and everything of the value of the people killed."

Kid: Does that mean they can take my teddy bear?

Person #2: And more.

Person #1: Why does the king seek to destroy us? He's treating us like traitors! What did we ever do?

*(Person #3 runs on stage.)*

Person #3: I just heard! The whole city is in turmoil!

*(Mordecai Enters)*

Person #2: Sir, Sir, have you seen this horrible decree?!?

Mordi: What decree? Let me see that. *(He reads and reacts.)* What is the King thinking? Does he think? This has to be the work of Haman.

*(To Mordi)*

Person #4: Sir, I'm not Jewish. But this is horrible.

Mordi: I understand. Thank you for your concern.

Person #4: Sir, I want to do more. Under Persian law, the decree cannot be reversed. But I would be willing to take in children . . . protect them . . .

Mordi: You would provide a hiding place?

Person #4: I would be honored.

Mordi: But you understand if you are discovered, our fate, will be your fate?

*(Sigh.)*

Person #4: I understand.

Mordi: You give me hope for our world. Thank you.

Person #2: Can anything be done?

Person #1: What can be done? The king trusts Haman above all others. No one will tell him it's wrong -- it could mean their death.

Mordi: There is one who may. *(He is thinking of Esther and he looks concerned, knowing the risk he will be asking her to take)*

I will appeal to heaven and to the one who can talk to the king for all of us.

Otherwise, we're to be annihilated, murdered and destroyed.

*(Jewish crowd starts putting on sack cloth -- gunny sacks, ideally died black -- men with ashes on their heads)*

### ***God Have You Deserted Me?***

*Esther 3:13; Psalms 22:1-3*

(chorus)

*Men (if small choir, add women)*

Annihilated, violated

murdered and destroyed

*(All -- women doing harmony)*

They'll grab all our property

They'll kill our girls and boys!

*(NOTE: All Crowd/Mordi Solos -- consider adding people/voices if not strong enough because of staging, vocal strength, or mics. Mordi should normally join men on song.)*

*(Individual lines by characters; parts are for crowd members 1-4)*

Crowd Member #1 they'll take our land

Crowd Member #2 they'll take our homes

Crowd Member #3 they'll take anything they can!

Crowd Member #4 they'll take our lives and property

All: we'll perish at their hands!

*(Mordi solos)*

God have you deserted me?

*(Mordi & all)* What have we done?

*Mordi*

To deserve being blotted out,  
without a ransom?

*all:* (Without a ransom)

*Women*

Once you saved your people  
with a mighty hand.

*All*

But now our cries are to the wind  
shall evil win?

(shall evil win?)

*(chorus)(Men)*

Are we to violated murdered and destroyed?

*(Men & Women harmony)*

Watching on in anguish as they kill our girls and boys?

*(All) (raising hands to the heavens)*

Lord, save Your people

We're afraid to die!

You're our strength, deliverer

Hear us as we cry!

(Hear us as we cry!)



## Scene #9

*(Mordi appears in gunny sack and moves on stage. Mordi plays side stage or beside the, somewhat distant from Esther, who most stay within the palace grounds.)*

Hatach: Queen Esther, something is happening in the courtyard! A man appears to be wearing a gunny sack and praying.

*(Esther enters and looks, goes out)*

Esther: Oh, no. I know that man! Something awful must have happened. Uncle Mordi, what is it!?!

Mordi: A terrible thing has happened. Here, please give the Queen a copy of the edict.

*(He hands over the document; Hatach leaves, someone hands Esther the document to speed it up. She reads and starts to collapse.)*

*(calling down)*  
Esther: You wear clothes of mourning -- has someone died?

*(Calling up)*  
Mordi: It's worse than that. All of us could die!

*(Hatach enters and hands her the edict, she reads as she talks)*

Esther: All the people to be killed? *(to herself)* How can this be? Oh, this is awful. Can anything be done?

Mordi: Isn't it obvious? You must speak to the king, my child.

Esther: But don't you remember what happened to Vashti? She was kicked out just for failing to appear when the king said so! And you want me to tell him his royal decree is a piece of . . . of . . . *(throws up hands, exasperated)* of well, really bad stuff!

Mordi: Surely you have some influence with the king? Don't you . . . um . . . see him regularly?

Esther: Oh, Uncle Mordi . . . he doesn't call for me any more. It's been over a month. I fear he loves someone . . . someone younger . . . And he spends all his spare time eating pork rinds and drinking root beer with his buddy, Haman.

Mordi: Oy! Pork rinds? A Month? This is worse than I thought. Still . . . you must try.

Esther: But Uncle Mordi! If any man or woman approaches the king without being summoned . . . the law . the law is . . . they're put to death! Unless . . . unless the king extends his royal scepter.

Mordi: Oh, Esther . . .

### *God Will Save His People*

Mordi:

A great evil shrouds the land.  
Kill the Jews is Haman's plan.  
You must stop the law the King decreed.  
Now, you must go before the King.  
To overturn this evil thing.  
For your people you must beg and plead.

For God will save His people  
God will find a way.  
And there is hope for today, if we pray,  
and proclaim the truth He commands.  
and proclaim the truth He commands.

*Esther:*

I listen in fear, anguish and grief,  
for my people there is no relief.

*Mordi:* (The king's decree you must resist.)

Oh, God could there be another way?  
Is this the cup I must drink today?

*Mordi:* (You were called for such a time as this.)

*Esther:* (Such a time as this!)

*Esther:*

(*Mordi joins*)

I know God will save His people  
God will find a way.

*Esther*

But if I try  
I may die  
so I sit and cry:  
What should I do today?  
What should I do today?

(*Interlude*)

Esther: Um . . . Uncle Mordi . . . God is powerful -- maybe -- maybe he can find another way to bring deliverance . . . someone . . . anyone . . . else.

Mordi: Child, in every generation some are called to stand up for God and His people. Some do become martyrs; but some, like Moses, bring deliverance . . . Perhaps that person is you. *(She grimaces)* Sweetheart, back when you were a little girl . . . do you remember praying to change the world? *(she nods)* . . . This is your chance!

*(Slightly incredulous.)*  
Esther: But I didn't know I might die! . . .  
*(sung)*  
I'm just an ordinary girl.  
Who am I to change the world?

*(interlude continues)*

Mordi: Esther, don't think that your royal position will save you from disaster. If you do nothing, deliverance for the Jews will come from somewhere else.  
But you and your family will perish.

*(she sighs)*

Esther: OK. Have the people fast and pray for three days.  
I will try. . .  
And if I perish . . . I perish.  
*(Mordi smiles)*

*Esther & Mordi*

For God will save His People  
God will find a way,  
*(Esther)*  
and knowing I might die  
still, I've gotta try . . .  
To change the king's command.  
*Rit. (Together)*  
To live for God . . . and in His Plan.

*(To audience)*

Mordi: And so it will be. We hope and pray for God's protection. Our future dangles upon Esther's graceful neck and a thin tread of hope -- the hope that God can and will work though young Esther to change the mind of the king.

*(Lights fade out; lights out)*

## Scene #10

*(To audience – Mordi Narration)*

Mordi: It has been three days. Three days of prayers. Prayers that the God of Israel will answer us. Of fasting and tears; of sackcloth and ashes. And more prayers.

*(Side stage)*

Small Child: Mommy, why do we light candles?

Child's Mother: Well, in the temple there are lamps and incense. And just as the smoke from the lamps and incense goes up to heaven so do our prayers. And God hears us. And He answers.

*(Esther enters from back or side of auditorium.)*

### **This Could Be the Day I Die**

*Esther:*

This could be the day I die  
Still I know I've gotta try  
While the soldier's blades are gleaming  
I will I tremble, I will cry:  
    Lord, save me or I will die.

*Jews: (holding candles)*

A thousand cries to heaven  
A thousand whispered prayers  
Undeserving of God's love and care.

But we'll cry unto the heavens  
to the God of Abraham.  
And our hearts say He'll meet us there.

*Esther:*

This could be the day I die  
This could be the day I die

*(Esther paces forward while Jews sing. She stops mid-audience for next verse. Soldiers will take out swords to slay her and look to the king. He will hold out the scepter at the end.)*

*(Music to "This could be the day I Die")*

*(The king is at his throne or desk. His scepter is beside him. Esther enters from back of audience in a beautiful robe. Jews come out to both sides carrying candles.)*

*(To herself and audience. May be ad libbed depending upon audience and mood.)*

Esther: This is it. I may be walking to my death. For if the king does not extend his scepter, I will be struck down.

*(Esther is shaking, her eyes teary.)*

What am I doing? . . .

Breath . . in and out . . don't look at the swords . . one step in front of the other . .

Lord, please prepare the king's heart. Let me know what to say . . what not to say.

Please, Lord . . prepare me.

*(She takes a deep breath and walks forward a few steps as music gives intro.)*

Jews:

A thousand cries to heaven

A thousand burning tears

A thousand hopes, a million prayers

*(Esther may join)*

We will cry unto the heavens

to the God of Abraham

And trust that He still cares

*Esther*

This could be the day I die

*Jews and Esther:*

This could be the day I die.

*(Jews blow out candles and go to one knee to pray to God while the rest of the scene plays out. Esther advances, faltering, as the king talks to himself.)*

*(to himself)*

King: What is this? . . the Queen in court?

What could be so important that she would risk her life to see me?

*(The guards position their swords to attack Esther; they take a few tentative steps forward, Esther turns her head to them, scared; they all look to the King. Esther advances further. She falters. Then she collapses on the ground, having fainted.)*

Esther: Oh, I'm so scared. Feel woozy . . . *(she faints and collapses)*

*The King now looks more concerned. The guards advance with swords. The King motions with his hand for them to stop. They do. The King now gets down from his throne and quickly approaches the queen. Taking her in his arms or lap. He may fan her and/or have a guard without sword fan her.*

*His voice is gentle.)*

King: Esther . . Esther . . wake up . .

*(She starts to come to.)*

Esther: Oh, my King . . .

*(To guards with swords.)*

King: Men . . get back! . . Can't you see she's frightened? . .  
*(to Esther)* Now, what is it my queen? . . What do you want? . .

Esther: My king . . I've made a mess . . disrupted the court . .

King: It's fine. It's fine. We were due for a little excitement. .  
Besides, I haven't had that effect on women for years. . . .  
*(He gives big cheesy Gastonish grin to audience.)*  
I've still got it!

*(She smiles.)*

Esther: Of course you do, your Majesty.

King: Look, can you get up? We've gotta keep up appearances. I'll extend my scepter.

*(Softly)*

Esther: Thank you.

*(The King and Esther both get up. The King may help her. He then returns to the throne. Esther sluggish, may have trouble walking. She raises her head, may adjust her crown. She walks forward, he extends his scepter, she touches the scepter and then bows to one knee. The King's voice fills the room.)*

King: Queen Esther what is your request?  
Anything you want, up to half the kingdom! It's yours.

Esther: Really!

*(To herself and under her breath.)*

Oh, of course, it's just an expression. Politics 101.

*(Regular voice. She raises her head to look at the king.)*

Your Majesty, if it pleases the king, please let the King and Haman come to a banquet that I have prepared for them.

*(The king is slightly bewildered. He waits a few seconds before responding.)*

King: First it was cookies, now lunch?  
Guard bring Haman at once, we will do lunch with the Queen!

## Scene #11

*SET CHANGE: Throne removed. Dining table in Esther's palace set up.  
(Guards leave; return with Haman, holding his arms. Haman trips on the stares, glares at the Guard)*

Haman: I can walk by myself idiots.

*(Regains his composure. Esther either alone or with servants serves the king and Haman.)*

Guard: You shouldn't call people idiots!

Haman: *(rolls eyes, under his breath)* Where have I heard that before?

King: Esther, this is about the best food I've had in ages.

Esther: Thank you, your Majesty. *(Demure and a bit flirtatious.)*  
I have missed seeing you. *(King beams. She's now back in earnest. Quietly.)*  
And it is important. .

King: I'm sure it is.  
And Haman -- my most honored and trusted servant -- it's must be quite an honor for you to join us.

*(Quietly -- gulp! -- to herself)*  
Esther: Most trusted?

*(Esther recoils from this tribute to Haman, the king continues while nibbling on a grape or similar trifle)*

Haman: Indeed, Sire. This has almost been the highlight of my year, although I've got a celebration coming up that might top it! It'll be a real killer.

King: Humm . . . Sounds interesting. Now, Esther, will you tell me? What is your request and what do you want? Even up to half my kingdom, you may have it.

*(Esther bites her lip and trembles, she should be fighting back tears.)*

Esther: *(under her breath)* Most trusted? . . .  
Umm . . My petition and request is this:

*(She goes to one knee to bow before him.)*  
If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition, then let the king *and* Haman come tomorrow to another banquet I have prepared for them. Then I will make my request.

(*Bewildered.*)  
King: Then, it will be done.

(*They exit*)

## Scene #12

**Author's Notes:** *I have tried to portray Haman with my understanding of the Biblical text and the way he is portrayed in the Jewish celebration of Purim -- essentially, as a comic book villain -- in pettiness, cruelty, and grandiose designs for destruction and death. He may have like Hitler -- pretty much humorless -- but for the story he's inept and a bit funny.*

**Setting:** *Haman's house*

(*Narrating*)  
Mordi: And, having eaten with the king and Esther, Haman was quite pleased with himself.

(*Haman enters from other door*)

Haman: Zee, I'm home!

(*Zee and at least 5 extras enter.*)

Zee: Oh, honey, we've got company. Now, now how was your day?

Haman: Oh my friends, such a day, such a day. Running my varied businesses. Oh, the billions I've made on the government contracts I wrote myself -- it's amazing how well that works.

The king has honored me above all others.

Today *I alone* ate with the king and queen. Tomorrow, I alone am invited *again* to dine with the king and queen Esther.

Zee: The king and queen! Oh, Honey, you've made it!

Haman: But on my way home, who should I see but that Jew, Mordecai. And even though I've got money and power and honors, well -- it's not fair! it's not fair -- he doesn't bow. I'll never feel right, so long as that cursed Jew Mordecai lives!

Zee: My husband, you've had a tough day. (*She hands him a drink/root beer.*)  
You're stressed out. (*He sits and it to almost purr during this scene. She rubs his shoulders.*)  
Now, let me help make it all better . . . Now, what you need to do is go to the king tomorrow morning . . . get him to sign a decree allowing you to kill Mordecai and then you can go to the banquet happy and content!



Haman: So, let me get this right, you want me to right up an edict to commit murder, just because I find this guy annoying?

Zee: Of course, Dear.

Haman: Oh, you're so good to me, Pumpkin. . .

*(All Exit.)*

### **Scene #13**

*(The King in baggy -- Lion King print? -- pajamas or an outer robe, possibly holding a teddy bear, contemplative; king may put robe over pajamas for next scene):*

*(Narrating. Side stage.)*

Mordi: But that night, while Haman plotted his revenge, God was working on the heart of the King.

King: Oh, it's late, I can't sleep. What's happening? Oh, why does my mind race, so? Why can't I sleep?

And what's up with Esther? . . Why haven't I called for her? . . . she's a breath of fresh air . . she wants to know everything . . about me. . about the kingdom. Never a complaint . . . and she makes really good cookies . .

### **The King's Lament**

*(Sung) (The king will stumble trying to come up with a good adjective -- the author did, too -- you may hold the rest a little longer than listed in music.)*

Oh, Esther, beautiful, Esther.  
You're sweet, submissive, serene.  
Oh, Esther, my sweet Esther.  
You're a perfectly . . perfect queen.

Oh, Esther would never pester --  
a man when he wants to have fun.  
But when she looks at me beseechingly --  
I know that she seeks in me --  
A knight a kingdom able to run.

*(Spoken)*

What is it that she will not reveal? What words stick like peanut butter to the roof of her mouth? Why did she risk death to see me? It can't be: "Let's do lunch?"

*(Sung)*

Esther, I have neglected you,

but you have never complained.  
I spent my time doing what I wanted to.  
My nights being entertained.

What questions clings the back of your tongue?  
What message hangs in the air?  
Is there an evil that threatens my people?  
    What sent you into despair?  
        (Does evil hang in the air?)

*(Optional Stanza)*

	<i>Tenors</i>	<i>Basses</i>
<i>(Servants)</i>	Evil . . lurking under your bed. God is speaking. Unto your thick head.	Evil lurking, under your bed God is speaking unto your thick head. Evil lurking, under your bed God is speaking, unto your thick head.

Whatever it is I'll find it out --  
    I'll be a man worthy of your esteem.  
    Oh, Esther, beautiful Esther,  
    In your eyes I'll be redeemed.  
    My perfectly -- perfect queen.  
        For I must find  
        this evil in time  
    for I can't get you out of my mind.

King:           RECORDS!

Servant #3:    You want to cut a record? Umm . . I'm not sure you're that good.

King:           What! Of course not. I need royal records. Something, anything to put me to sleep.

Servant #3:    Ummm . . . I know just the passage.

Let's see:

OK . . June 5 . . . the King got his nails clipped -- he had a hangnail -- and it was like reported that somebody wanted to kill the king, see. (*King eye open wide.*)  
And there was like a royal investigation and stuff like that. (*King starts to look up.*)  
The guy who fingered the bad dudes was Mordecai the Jew (*King looks disconcerted*), who passed it along to Esther, who told a guard, who told the chief guard, who told their commander, who arrested the Eunuchs, who confessed under bright lights and opera music.

King:           Hold it! A plot against me? When did this happen?

Servant #3: Five years ago your Majesty, shortly after Esther became queen.

The report was apparently filed under the month of "Goon." (*Note: Rhymes with "June"*)

King: Mordecai -- the Jew -- saved my life?  
(*To himself*) Aren't those the people Haman said were a danger to our Kingdom?  
But he saved my life?  
(*King's bewildered -- more than usual -- but he's starting to put the pieces together.*)  
And how . . . how did Esther know this man?  
(*To Soldier*)  
Soldier, what honor do the records show was given to this man. . . . Mordecai?

Servant #3: Ummm . . . it appears that nothing was done for him, your Majesty. Although they do state that the condemned had meatloaf and sauerkraut as their last meal.

King: Incredible! . . .  
Who would choose meatloaf and sauerkraut as a last meal!?! . . .  
And how could a man save my life and not receive a reward?  
Who is in the court?

Servant #3: Your majesty, Haman has arrived. He's reading the morning scroll, drinking tea, and eating a Danish.

(*Taken back*)

King: Eating a Danish!?!

Servant #3: It's a pastry, not a peasant.

King: Oh. (*Nods.*) I knew that. Bring him in.

(*Haman should be reading a paper and holding a scroll. May have others around him, all of whom look apprehensive -- Haman is thrilled.*)

Servant #2: Haman, his majesty request that your presence.

Haman: This is it. Now is my chance to get Mordecai's execution papers signed.

(*Steps into the court before the King*)

Good morning, Your Majesty, did you sleep well?

King: Actually, I had a fitful night.  
(*To himself*) It's like I'm missing something  
(*To Haman*) -- Haman, I must honor a man who has done me a great service.

Haman: *(Aside to Audience)* Honor a man who has done a great service -- surely he means only me! This is just what I always wanted: For everyone to see me in my glory . . . while Mordecai lies impaled on the gallows.

That's just wonderful your Majesty!

King: Haman, I have a question, for you.

Haman: Oh, yes, your majesty!

King: What should be done for the one the king desires to honor?

Haman: *(Haman smiles, he's sure the king means him.)*

Oh, Your Majesty, for the one the king seeks to honor. Let a royal robe -- one that has been worn by the king -- and a horse that has been ridden by the king -- be prepared.

Now, let the man the king desires to honor be paraded around town on this horse by one of the royal princes and have the prince proclaim: "This is what is done for the one the king desires to honor!"

King: That is an excellent plan. You know, you have the position of a prince within my kingdom.

Haman: *(Gleaming)* Yes, I do.

King: So, go at once and do it for Mordecai the Jew.

*(Haman's jaw drops. He slumps. Optional: The king moves over and flicks the bottom of his jaw. Haman clicks his tongue as his jaw closes.)*

King: Oh, and Haman.

Haman: Yes, your majesty.

King: Be sure to do everything you have suggested.

Haman: Uh, huh . . .

*(Haman then either pushes Mordecai. Ideally a horse mask -- about \$20 -- with black costume can be used together with a cart for Mordi to ride in. But also Haman can push Mordi around on a swivel chair or a big guy -- a "horse" when I played football -- may be used with Mordecai on his back. Haman's words are downcast and full of dejection. Servants/crowd bow as Mordecai passes. Some may snicker.)*

Haman: Hear Ye! Hear Ye! This is what is done for the one the king desires to honor. . . I don't know why he wants to honor him . . . but he does. . . Hear Ye! Hear Ye! this is what is done for the one the king desires to honor -- I don't know why -- but he does . . . Hear Ye Hear Ye! This is what is done for the one the king desires to honor . . .

Crowd #1: Hey, isn't that Haman, the King's counselor? Now he's a page! What a demotion! Wow!

#### Scene 14

*(Narrating, side stage.)*

Mordi: As you might imagine -- in spite of having a pastry named after him -- Haman was not the happiest guy that day.

*(Exit, pushing Mordi offstage. Haman runs back on stage almost in tears, Zee meets him across stage)*

Haman: Oh, I have never been so humiliated. I had to go around the city proclaiming Mordecai as the king's favored one! I think I'm going to be sick.

Zee: I have heard my husband. Oh, this is dreadful. It's an omen of what's to come.

Friend: Sorry, old man, but if you take on the Jews, you take on their God.  
*(Cheerfully)* You're doomed.

Haman: I want my mummy.

*(Guard #4 enters in a hurry)*

Guard #4: Haman, Esther's banquet has been prepared. And you're not there!

Haman: Oh, no!

*(He grabs cloak or cain and exits to table to table where Esther and the King sit.)  
(Haman is escorted to side stage where the meal is.)*

King: Haman, you're late. You've insulted my queen.

Haman: I'm sorry, Your Majesty.

King: I trust that you did all I told you concerning Mordecai, the Jew? . . . The Jew who saved my life. *(Haman gulps loudly.)*

*(Esther takes this in -- smiles -- and realizes the time has come for the truth.)*

Haman: Of course, Your Majesty.

King: *(He half bows to Esther)* And now, my gracious, beautiful Queen, will you please tell me your petition? Whatever it is, it will be given you.

*(Bowing and trembling)*

Esther: Oh, my King, if I have found favor with you, and if it pleases your majesty, *please* save my life -- this is my petition. *(King is taken back.)* And spare my people -- that is my request. *(King reacts again.)*

But I and my people have been sold for destruction and slaughter and annihilation.

King: What! Someone is trying to kill you! Who is it?  
Where is anyone who would dare to try to attack my queen!?!

*(Pointing)*

Esther: The adversary and enemy is this vile Haman!

*(Haman looks at both of them in fear. Drops food. Consider having Haman spit out food or water all over the place.)*

Haman: EKE!

King: I can't believe it! . . . He's been playing me for a fool!  
*(Leaves slamming door. Haman sees him leave. Esther gets up from the table where they were eating and moves to a futon.)*

*(He approaches Esther kneeling before her.)*

Haman: Oh, queen Esther . . . please . . . *(she looks at him with disdain)*  
please . . . I didn't know you were a Jew . . . I didn't know . . . I mean, how could I?

Esther: But you did know that you would kill millions with that decree. . .

Haman: *(Whining)* Well yes, but those people don't matter. They're not special . . . *like me. . .*  
*(Quickly realizing he's excluded her.)*  
And you, of course.

Can't we all just be friends? We can all get together at the end and sing *It's a Small World*.

Esther: No. I hate that song. It rattles around in your head forever. And, I think you should pay for your sins!

*(Delete "Go on Oprah" if she's no longer on the air and insert another name or delete completely.)*

Haman: Why should I? I'm in government. I'll cry. Say "mistakes were made".  
"I apologize if anyone was offended."

Esther: Haman, you tried to kill millions!

And people should be in government because they want to help others, not just themselves!

Haman: Huh?

*(Esther is in an awed, "ain't it wonderful" voice. Piano starts playing My Country This of Thee, which is public domain, or God Bless America, if you've purchased the rights/sheet music.)*

Esther: That's right. Someday there will be governments and nations that realize they serve *under God*. Where governments are of the people, by the people and for the people. Where corruption is rare.

And when that happens people will give thanks to God to be blessed with such a government . . . and they will rarely complain.

Haman: . . . you don't get out much, do you?

*(Kings bursts in)*

King: What is he doing beside her?! Will he try playing patty cake with my queen right under my nose?

Guard #4: Get him.

*(They place sack on Haman's head and drag him away)*

Hachi: Your majesty, a gallows 75 feet high stands beside Haman's house. He meant it for Mordecai, who spoke up to save the king!

King: Hang him on it! *(They drag Haman away.)*

*(Note: Consider experimenting with some over the top exit screams. For instance, holding the scream for 15-30 seconds or a Tarzan yell that pulls up short.)*

Haman: *(Off-stage)* Awwwwwwwwkkkk!

*(falling before him)*

Esther: Oh, my King, thank you . . .

King: Of course, my queen. Guards! Get Mordecai NOW!

*(Esther crying out in distress)*  
Esther: Oh, my King, please change the law. . . spare my people . . . my family . . . please . .

*(Mordi is escorted in, king in a soft voice.)*  
*(To Esther, the king nods -- he holds out his scepter. She touches it.)*

King: Esther, your request is granted -- Oh, I love it when I'm decisive!  
Mordecai, you saved my life. YOU, I can trust. *(Mordi bows and smiles)*

Now while the laws of the Persians cannot be changed, write whatever you think is necessary to undo the evil of Haman. Seal it with my ring.

Mordi: Bring in the scribes.

*(Scribes enter. Mordi assumes stance of one giving dictation, composing the right words.)*

Ummm . . . write as follows:

"In every city, the Jews are to have the right to protect themselves and to annihilate and destroy those who sought to destroy them.

Esther: Thank you your majesty.

King: No, thanks to you, my lady. For what you have done is braver than any soldier I have ever seen. *(She moves beside him, and looks at him with wonder.)*

Esther: You are . . . you have become . . the man I always hoped you'd be.

*(She kisses the king on the cheek. King swells with pride.)*

***(OPTIONAL Song – Time permitting)***

***The Man of My Dreams (reprise)***

Oh, the man of my dreams,  
He'd be my king  
He'd hold me in arms so tight  
And when he found injustice  
He'd reach out to help us  
I've found the man of my dreams.

*(continue on if Optional song not used)*

Esther: Oh, Uncle Mordi, we're saved. . . .  
*(Turns to the King)*



Thanks to the King. *(She does a slight bow.)*

Mordi: We are this time. Because some prayed. Because you acted.

*(Cast starts to enter.)*

Crowd M. #1: Hail Mordecai and Queen Esther! Protectors of God's people!

*(Cook Runs in)*

Cook: Hey, everyone! I've created a new dessert! It's a Mordistashen! . . .  
A pastry . . . it's sweet *(Mordi beams)*  
but a little flaky. . . *(Mordi's smile freezes, looks at cook then to audience)*

*(Narrating, may eat a bite of his dessert):*

Mordi: So, my friends, we are not in danger and of losing everything. Today.  
Because some prayed. Because we serve the Living God. Because He cares.

*(Cast enters)*

***God Will Save His People (Reprise)***

For God has saved His people!  
God has found a way.  
And there is hope for today,  
If we pray,  
and proclaim the truth He commands,  
and proclaim the truth He commands.

***The End***

## Additional Comments/Suggestions

### 1. Character Notes (how the characters were written).

- a. **Esther** is a classic heroine. She's gutsy, humble and beautiful (the last one is specifically mentioned in the Bible). She wants to live her faith but is wise enough to hide her Jewish identity among the Persians. (Jewish tradition holds that, like Daniel, she became a vegetarian while in court so that she could keep Kosher.)

As a young girl/woman (14-18) she has dreams of the future will bring. She's conflicted about being chosen for the harem, but once selected she in it to win. She's humble enough to seek and take advice (from Mordi and the chief Eunuch). Girl enough to flirt. She's smart enough to know that this military king -- who normally gets whatever he wants -- has to "win" his Queen in order to prize her, hence the pillow fight.

Later, as a young women (19-23), she struggles with the rejection of being out of the king's favor -- of being replaced by both the pretty, dumb girls who surround her and Haman's flattery and camaraderie. Her courage is shown most in her willingness to do what's right, even while she's scared to death. She longs for a relationship with her husband, and loves him, in spite of his flaws.

- b. **Mordi**. He's based loosely on Teyve in *Fiddler on the Roof*. He's a man of faith. But he goes through life with a certain bemused acceptance that life and the people around him aren't perfect. He smirks a little at the childish behavior of the Persian rulers, and even a bit at Haman. One Jewish writer has commented that their people have been using humor to emotionally deal with their trials for centuries. That's what Mordi does.

Mordi loves Esther passionately. Most commentators believe that he was outside the palace gates because of his concern for how Esther was faring inside. He's a very good dad.

- c. **The King** is a mixture of the Gaston from *Beauty and the Beast* or Prince Humperdinck from *The Princess Bride*. He is narcissistic and easily manipulated. But our king also has a desire to be a good king; he will redeem himself at the end. And we have to believe that there is a reason Esther can love this flawed ruler.

Depending upon which Persian King was actually the King in the book of Esther he may be mentioned in other Biblical passages. Jewish tradition says that he was also referred to as Artaxerxes in the book of Ezra. In Ezra he seems to have had some admirable qualities -- thoughtful, able to be persuaded, directing that records be examined, and ultimately changing his mind (upon learning new facts) and exhibiting a generosity to the Jewish re-building effort. In short, the portrayal in book of Esther (and here) of a slightly buffoonish King may be overstated.

- d. **Haman** is mostly a comic Disneyish villain (or, perhaps, Harvey Korman in *Blazing Saddles*). He's inept, petty and over-the-top. A buffoon.

The comic Haman may not be true to the original man -- he may have been as harsh, cruel, and humorless as Hitler. But the Jews (and the writer of Esther) have portrayed him with these humorous elements and so I have elected to follow suit.

Perhaps this is because humor is one way of dealing emotionally with enemies as vile as Haman. There is a bit of "spoonful of sugar" in the Jewish portrayal of Haman. In a way, Haman represents a harsh truth -- there are people who want the entire Jewish nation dead. Because of their faith, their heritage, because they are different. By making him a cartoon villain -- who can be laughed at -- he is less threatening, more easy to handle, and can be presented to children with a smile (and a good-natured boo!).

- f. **Zee.** Vain. A bit manipulative. A touch of Jezebel: "Oh, you're upset. Just kill the guy. . . Now, clean up for dinner."
- g. **Esther's "Friends."** Obviously spoiled, jealous and frivolous. Much more interested in fashion and boys than doing anything substantial with their lives.
- h. **Henchman.** These people come in two forms: (a) latchkeys of Haman; (b) haters of Jews and representatives of Nazi brutality (they join to kill and plunder).

The latchkeys fawn over Haman's every word, even as they are verbally abused by him -- they desire to trace and follow him forever. The "loyal henchman" is a standard fixture in melodrama.

- i. **Hagai/Hatach.** The two Eunuchs are both sympathetic confidants of Esther. It appears historically that Esther was segregated from society once she became queen (Mordi had to send notes rather than talking with her, as I am portraying it). They are wise and love her. Like Mordi, they are probably older men who mentor her and treat her as something of a daughter. Hatach, at least in my version, knows Esther is Jewish but keeps it quiet (it's suggested her court knew as they joined her fast).
- j. **Bachelorettes / Royal Chronicler.** Airheads. Prototypical dumb blonds. I have portrayed them both as talkative and spacey. You may experiment with making one spacey in a different way -- *e.g.*, unresponsive to questions, as if she's high.
- k. **Regular Persians/King's Reader.** Normal Persians and members of the court are portrayed in the book of Esther as sympathetic and worried. The community is dismayed and in turmoil over the heinous decree the king has signed. But, no one can tell the king he is wrong (without risking death).

Then, late at night, a "reader" tells the King of how his life was saved because of Mordecai. I don't believe he was reading the passage at random. He's had the passage ready for a long time, waiting for the opportunity. So too, the guards who know the gallows are waiting for Mordi are only too willing to implicate Haman once they know that it is safe to do so. (I suspect the "Reader" was, like Esther, waiting for the right time to share the passage.)

1. **Jewish Community.** At the beginning (opening) they wonder what happened to their once proud culture -- does God protect them while they have largely assimilated into foreign lands, foreign cultures?

Later, they live in passive terror. Crying out to God. They represent the multitudes that were sent to the death camps. Henchman (other than those singing) may chase, beat and lead them away during songs such as Satan's servants.

At the end -- having lived with the death sentence for months -- they take revenge on their enemies (this was actually in violation of Jewish law).

### *Suggestions*

#### Getting Gigs

The easiest way to book a performance for this play is to contact-- (ideally in person) churches and synagogues and ask to present it to "Children's Church", Vacation Bible School (more difficult, as programs tend to be structured), senior groups, Sunday night church, or to Sunday school classes. It works best, of course, if you or someone in your group attends the church/synagogue.

Make sure you know how long you have, so that cuts can be made if necessary.

Arguments to be made (provided they are true) are: (1) the story is from the Bible; (2) some of the actors are not religious but are curious about God and this will get them into the church/synagogue; (3) they probably have an upcoming week when they're short teachers; (4) you work for free; (5) members of your group are studying to be teachers and/or have experience working with kids; (6) kids love the show (they like to boo the villain); (7) this is the ministry God called you to.

Other potential performance spots: Senior Citizen Centers (they love to see young people -- and they're apt to give contributions!); summer community events (*e.g.*, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebrations); Fertile Ground (and other) original theater presentation; some 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> run theaters have Saturday matinees with short theater works (and they pay); Nursing homes (some have budgets for entertainment).

Please let me know what works for you as it's important to share what works with others.

Dennis

## School Credit

We learn by doing.

If you're a student, consider checking with teachers/professors about getting school credit for directing or putting the program together, especially if you plan multiple performances.

The skills developed in putting together a short play are similar to those necessary for artistic directors or directors: working with people, negotiating performance dates, dealing with budget constraints, and acting. It may involve costumes and sets.

While this version is designed for a short program, you can expand it for a presentation to your friends or a church or synagogue that is the length of a 1 or 2 Act play.

It may look good on a resume.

Dennis

## Being a Star / Being Professional

If you're a theater geek you may sometimes get upset with others who aren't as good (or as dedicated) as you are. Sometimes you'll want to scream. Sometimes you'll want to quit. Don't.

Making it in theater is just like making it in music or sports – the cream rises. And the “cream” tends to be those who are both talented and dedicated. The reason that a star becomes a star is that they had voice and/or drama lessons for years prior to the audition.

You may be a natural but the people around you generally (unless you're at a drama college) aren't. Most of the people you work with are going to be amateurs who are there because they like and trust you. Not because they have a dream of making a career of it. Of course they're not as dedicated. They don't share your dream.

Steven Spielberg and J.J. Abrams were making Super-8 movies as teenagers. Perfecting their craft. Schmoozing their friends to be actors. Begging their parents for money.

If you want to make a career in theater, you have to be like Spielberg and Abrams. Doing short, small plays. Learning to give directions. Working as an assistant director. Learning to write. Learning when to let something slide and when to kick someone's tail.

So be professional. Show up on time. Learn your lines. Hit your marks. Be an example. Perfect your craft.

But be patient and loving with amateurs. You need them. And they need you. They need your encouragement. They need you to be an example. They need to know that even though they're average, they're important to you and to the show.

## Royalties / Donations / Expanding the Show

Theater, Purim or Church/Synagogue Presentations: The short version of this play may be used royalty free provided that there are no ticket charges and/or request for an offering/donation.

For smaller “free” presentations please consider – although you are not required to – designating a “hat” or place where people are allowed to make contributions to the author so that further works may be created. (The cost of one song is frequently over \$1,000. Partly because there are often five versions produced before I believe a song is adequate.)

Also, please consider contacting me to expand the show. There are a number of wonderful songs that are not included in this presentation in order to keep it short. These include: *Women!* (the King), *It's So Wonderful Being Me!* (Haman), *I've Never Felt Like This Before* (Esther/The King), and *Killin' the Jew* (*Zee, Haman, Chorus*).

If tickets or donations are to be collected, one of the following is to be used:

1. 15% of revenue to the author.
2. If done as part of a dinner theater, 15% of anything above \$5-\$10 per plate (depending upon the cost of food – contact me if it's an expensive dinner and you want to do a percentage after allowing for higher dinner cost).
3. Taking donations, putting something in the program, and/or announcing to the audience something along the following lines:

*We are grateful that the playwright, Dennis L. Dunn, has allowed us to present this material without charge. However, as writers [and actors] have to eat, please consider making a donation to support [our theater company's and] the author's continued work.*

*Also, if you have friends in theater suggest they review the complete play (and Ruth) at Bibletheater.org (that's “org” not “com”). Mr. Dunn's contact info is there.*

Note: If a “hat” is used please decide ahead of time what split is being used for actors/musicians and me. I'm trusting organizers to be fair.

Exception: Sometimes you work hard and nobody shows up (or it's in a park and the hat is pretty bare). If you take in less than \$50 at a performance, fees are waived.

A side note: If you're a young actor trying to put this together, make sure funds are sent promptly. It's easy to let it slide with rent and food and life. But if you let it slide your conscience will bother you and you'll wind up sabotaging yourself. Thou shall not steal is still in the Ten Commandments.