

Purim Play For Children

Megillah: And it came to pass in the reign Ahashverosh, a great king who ruled in Hodu over 127 province and ruled in Shoshun the capital.

[Enter King, Haman, and advisors stage left and sit in chairs around table]

...Now this king, like many before him, had many advisors and councillors. People to help him make decisions and do kingly things.

In the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his ministers. A really great party for all these advisors with lots food and drink and he really wanted to show off how rich and powerful he was.

As you can see the banqueting room was full of sumptuous drapes and beautiful furniture studded with jewels and pearls, and only the very best gold and silver plates [king and advisors hold up ordinary plates] and knives and forks [king and advisors hold up plastic knives and forks].

So, after some eating and quite a lot of drinking, in fact more than quite a lot of drinking, the king decided to demonstrate his power and to call for his wife to come and join the feast.

Scene 1

Ahashverosh: [drunkenly] Now my wife.... My wife..... beautiful You don't know what beautiful means until you see Vashti. She really is a wife fit for a king of such a great nation. Wait.... I'll call her....Vashti [louder] Vashti....[louder] Vashtiiiiii.

Palace servant: Oh great king – erm [nervously] ... I don't think she is going to come. [Even more nervously] She says she's too busy having fun herself.

Ahashverosh: [Angrily] Whaaattt.... She won't whattt!!!??? She's too what?????!!!!

[Decisively] Right. [Advisors gather round] Advisors what should we do about this. Advise me.

Haman: [Silkily] Well great king – What I would do if I were you...

Ahashverosh: Yes Haman?

Haman: [Silkily] What I would do

Ahashverosh: Yes?

Advisors: Yes?

Haman: [Aggressively] ...is banish her forever.

Megillah: And so he did, or did something very similar. But this left him with a problem. Now he had no beautiful wife fit for a king of Persia. What could he do. His advisors discussed all this and finally, Haman came up with a clever idea.

Haman: What you need to do oh great and powerful king, is to hold a sort of beauty contest.

Ahashverosh: [not listening] Yes, yes yes. Wait a minute ... I've had a great idea. Why don't we organise a beauty contest! Yes, yes, yes. That's it. Organise one at once so I may choose the fairest woman for my new bride, Ah ... it's good to be King!

[All exit stage left]

Megillah: So the decree went out. The king was going to hold a beauty contest. At this time in Shushan there was a wise and clever Jewish man called Mordechai. He was good and clever and kind and an all round good guy. He also looked after his niece the beautiful Esther.

[Enter Esther and Mordechai stage right talking]

Scene 2

Mordechai: My dear niece Esther. The king is looking for a new wife by holding a beauty contest. If you enter and win it your position next to King Ahashverosh as his queen would help our people be aware of any evil plans towards the Jews. But you best not to tell anyone you're Jewish for now. Please sign up for that training course on "How to marry a Persian King."

Esther: I'll agree to enter the contest. I will do what is necessary for the safety of my people. But, I won't wear a bikini.

[Exit Mordechai and enter on cue from Megillah reading the beauty parade from stage right and the king and advisors from stage left]

Megillah: So the great day came and all the most beautiful women in Shushan and from many thousands of miles around paraded before the king and his advisors.

[Each of the beauties parades before the king and then is interviewed by the narrator]

Scene 3

[Enter beauty contestants, host, King and co-judges who sit stage left]

Beauty contest host: And where are you from young lady?

Beauty contestant 1: From the province of Wimbledonana

Beauty contest host: Tell us what your name is?

Beauty contestant 1: [Smiling to audience] My name is Nigella

Beauty contest host: And what do you want in life

Beauty contestant 1: I want the world to be a happy place and I want to work with children and bring about world peace.

Beauty contest host: What a lovely young lady. And now our next contestant please.
[next contestant walks down]

Now where are you from and what's your name pretty lady.

Beauty contestant 2: My name's Tracy and I'm from Goldena Greenin.

Beauty contest host: And what do you do with yourself.

Beauty contestant 2: I shop.

Beauty contest host: And what do you do in your leisure time.

Beauty contestant 2: I have coffee with my friends, go clubbing and talk a lot about boys.

Beauty contest host: Lovely. And the next contestant please. Tell us a little about yourself.

Beauty contestant 3: I'm Kylie from Ilforda. I want to be very rich, marry lots of times, be on Big Brother and in Hello, and have lots of cosmetic surgery by the time I'm 40.

Beauty contest host: Super, terrific. And our next lovely lady please.

Esther: I just want to be a good dutiful wife. To serve my master the great, wise, handsome, kind and caring king Ahashverosh and promise to come whenever he calls me.

Ahashverosh: [leaps to his feet and runs to Esther grabbing her] Baby – you got the job!

Megillah: And the king loved Esther more than any of his wives and he placed a royal crown on her head and gave her Vashtis' place.

Now in those days while Mordechai sat at the king's gate by the wall around the city, Bigtan and Teresh, two of the king's guards who were angry with the king, came to the King's Gate and began to talk.....

Enter Bigtan and Teresh. Bigtan is the 'brains' of the outfit though both are not the brightest. In fact Teresh is borderline idiot and definitely one sandwich short of a picnic. They are typical Laurel and Hardy, Eccles and Bluebottle double act.]

Bigtan: I'm fed up

Teresh: (stupidly) Yeah – fed up.

Bigtan: Why does the king have to have all the fun and we have to do all the hard work.

Teresh: Yeah – (at first trying to remember and so repeat what Bigtan has said and then...) Fed up.

Bigtan: How about us having some of the fun and him doing the hard work for a change?

Teresh: Yeah – fed up.

Bigtan: Are you listening to me?

Teresh: Yeah....

Bigtan: So why do you keep saying....

Teresh: (completing his sentence) ... fed up.

Bigtan: You know you are the thickest person I know. You're thicker than a plank of wood nailed to a another plank of wood and then fixed on to the side of ... of ... another plank of wood all wrapped up in another 29 planks of wood.

I'm fed up

Teresh: Yeah....

Bigtan: (getting angry) Don't you say anything. (calmer) What's the time?

(Teresh digs into his pocket and takes out a piece of paper)

Teresh: (Reading) A quarter past 3.

Bigtan: How do you know it's a quarter past 3. Watches haven't been invented yet.

Teresh: Cos it's written down on this piece of paper.

Bigtan: Cor ... that's good. Wait a minute – what if it isn't the correct time.

Teresh: Then I don't read out the bit of paper.

Bigtan: Can I have that bit of paper with the time written on it?

Teresh: No

Bigtan: Why not?

Teresh: Cos no-one knows the time. Clocks haven't been invented yet!

Bigtan: Oh this is ridiculous. I don't want to do things like this any more. What we need is a cunning plan. Now let me think.

Teresh: I had a cunning plan once.

Bigtan: Really?

Teresh: Yeah – it went like this. When I was in the army, you know they say that you can only get killed if the arrow has your name on it?

Bigtan: Yeah

Teresh: Well, what I did is I got an arrow and I carved my name on it and then I broke it in half and kept the pointy bit with my name on it in my pocket. That why I couldn't ever never be killed.

Bigtan: You're an idiot.

Teresh: Well I may be an idiot but I'm still here so it must have worked.

Bigtan: I'm gonna kill you.

Teresh: No chance.

Bigtan: Why

Teresh: I've got that arrow in my pocket with my name on it!

Bigtan: (makes to get him, but then stops suddenly) Wait. I've got it. Let's kill the king!

(Mordechai folds up his paper and listens attentively)

Teresh: Oh no.

Bigtan: Why?

Teresh: Well I don't think he'd like that?

Bigtan: Stupid – how will he know – he'll be dead!

Teresh: Ohhh. Yea.

Bigtan: And then we can take over the whole kingdom.

Teresh: (smiling) Yeah.

Bigtan: And never have to work again.

Teresh: (Smiling even more widely). Yeah.

Bigtan: And live in the palace and have lots of food and loads of wine, and dancing girls and money and swimming pools and everything we ever wanted.

Teresh: (really excited) Yeah ... yeah... yeah.. yeah.

Bigtan: We'll do it. We'll do it tomorrow.

Teresh: Yeah. When?

Bigtan: A quarter past 3.

Teresh: How will we know it's a quarter past 3? Watches haven't been invented yet.

Bigtan (exasperated) Oh for goodness sake. You'll look at your piece of paper.

Teresh: (suddenly understanding) Oh yeah!

Bigtan: We'll (aside to audience, evilly) Do away with him!

Teresh: How?

Bigtan: Pardon?

Teresh: How will we (aside to the audience) do away with him?

Bigtan: Well (thinks) we could drop a brick on his head. Or... how about scaring him so that he has a heart attack? Or you could just bore him to death.

Teresh: Yeah – I could do that.

Bigtan: Come on let's go home and work it out. (As they leave) when I'm king do you think I could have your piece of paper with the time on it?

Teresh: No – get your own.

Bigtan: (whining) but Teresh ... go on. Who's your friend.....

[Exit Bigtan and Teresh followed by Mordechai who leaves stealthily shortly after]

Meggilah: Mordechai, having overheard this whole plan to kill the king told Esther, who told her husband the king in Mordechai's name. When the king investigated the matter he had them executed and the whole thing written in the king's diary called the Book Of Chronicles.

But the king also decided to promote Haman, son of Hamdata, the Agagite and put him in charge of all of his other ministers and told all of his subjects that in future they must kneel and bow down before Haman.

[Mordechai re-enters and stands right reading]

Scene 4

[Enter Haman left]

Haman: It's hard being adored and adulated by everyone. I find it such a strain having to acknowledge the acclamation. But one must do one's duty. Actually its been ages since anyone has kneeled and bowed down before me. Well at least 5 minutes. I think I'll go for a little walk by the King's Gate and indulge myself in some sycophantic servile grovelling from the peasants.

[Haman walks deliberately in front of Mordechai who ignores him and carries on reading. Haman walks back again. Still Mordechai doesn't react. Haman walks slowly, coughs, and stands there. Still nothing.]

Haman: Do you know who I am you insolent rogue?

Mordechai: Yes, you are Haman son of Hamdata, the Agagite.

Haman: Do you not know that king commands you to kneel, bow and scrape and generally fawn and worship me whenever I appear you dog?

Mordechai: Yes I know that too.

Haman: [Very angry] Then why don't you do it you, you.... you person you.

Mordechai: I cannot worship you because I am a Jew. I only worship the one god, the master of the universe who rules us all. I worship no mere man.

[Exit Mordechai right]

Haman: [Calling after him] You... youyou dog, you goat, you cur....you.... I'll get you. I'll get you.

[Enter King and advisors]

Ah King.. the very person I was looking for. Your highness, your greatness, your magnificence, your incredibly incredibleness, your wonderfully wonderfulness, your....

Ahashverosh: Yes, yes, yes. I'm a busy man. I have a lot to do. I don't have a lot of time for all this flattery.

Haman: Very well King I will come straight to the point. I was walking.....

Ahashverosh: Well perhaps I have a little more time....

Haman: [Fussing round the king.] Oh your, your, your, munuring manuringsense.

Ahashverosh: All right Haman. That'll have to do this once. What are you after?

Haman: Well, your majesty, there are people among us who refuse to bow down to us and are trying to cause the collapse of your kingdom. They are very dangerous. I feel we must do away with them

Ahashverosh: All right. Do whatever you think best.

Haman: Ohhh thank you great and brilliantly shining brilliantness. And please, please, please can I have a royal proclamation, proclaiming this proclamation in a proclamatory fashion. I just love royal proclamations.

Ahashverosh: [distractedly] Yes, yes whatever.

Haman: [weezley] And if you'd like to give me that signet ring of yours, to save you having to go to any trouble sealing all those tiresome proclamations.

Ahashverosh: [pulling ring from finger] Very thoughtful of you Haman. I am a very, very busy man. [handing him the ring] There you are. Now do try not to disturb me again. I'm going for a little nap. I seem to be sleeping so badly these days.
[Exit King stage left]

Haman: [to the audience] At last I can get my own back on Mordechai. What? You don't think I can do it. Oh yes I can.

[the 'oh no you can't' schtick].

Oh I've had enough of this.

Now all I have to do is to chose a day on which to have my vengeance on Mordechai and all of the jews. How shall I do that? How? Ah yes – I know – I'll leave it to the gods and draw lots from a hat.

[Enter Beauty contestant host]

Beauty Contestant Host: Did someone say lottery?

Meggillah: The Kings scribes were then summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and all that Haman commanded was written down in proclamations and sealed with the royal ring. Each one of these hundreds of proclamations were delivered to all of the king's provinces and all his rulers of these provinces were told that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month they must rise up and do away with all of the Jews living amongst them. And even in the capital, Shushan, where Haman, and Mordechai, The King and Esther lived, even there the proclamation was read out. And so Mordechai heard.

Scene 5

[Enter Mordechai stage right and Esther]

Mordechai: Esther, thank you for coming to meet me. You have heard of Haman's proclamation against us?

Esther: Yes Uncle.

Mordechai: Esther you must help us.

Esther: But Uncle what can I do?

Mordechai: Esther, just because you are the wife of the king do not think that you will be spared. Haman means to kill us all.

Esther: But Uncle, you know that I cannot go to the King unless I am summoned by him. To go uninvited means certain death unless the King decides to be merciful.

Mordechai: But perhaps it was for this that you were chosen as his queen. You cannot stand by and let this awful thing happen to us.

Esther: Very well. I will do it Uncle. I will go to the King even if it means my death. But please gather all of the Jews of Shushan and have them fast and pray for me for three days and I will fast and pray too. And then I will go to the King and if I perish, then I perish.

[Exit Mordechai right]

Megillah: So on the third day Esther put on her royal clothes and stood in the inner courtyard of the palace. The king was sitting in the courtyard and saw Queen Esther and he smiled at her and invited her to speak. And she invited the King and Haman to dinner. And Haman was flattered at being so honoured as to be asked by the Queen to dine with her and the king. And he went home happy, until once again he saw Mordechai at the King's Gate and once again Mordechai refused to bow to him. So, in readiness for the massacre he had planned he built a special gallows on which he planned to hang Mordechai. Meanwhile, that night in the King's bedroom....

[Enter King]

Scene 6

Ahashverosh [reclining in bed] Ten thousand one hundred and nine sheep. Ten thousand one hundred and ten sheep. Ten thousand one hundred and eleven sheep. Ten thousand one hundred and....

[Enter servant with mug]

Servant 1: Your magnificent municipality would you like your royal Ovaltine to help you go off to sleep?

Ahashverosh: [Reflectively] Would I like some Ovaltine? Yes, yes that might help me sleep, mightn't it? I just can't get off at the moment you know. Too many things to think about. Ovaltine. Yes, [takes mug] and now I can get back to counting sheep.

It's supposed to help you know. Ten thousand, two hundred and.... Nine thousand one hundred... Elven thousand eight.....[long pause – deep sigh and then slowly] One, two, three. Oh this will never work. [to servant] Oi, you. Little man. Read me something that might get me off. Read to my diary. My book of Chronicles.

Servant 2: Very well your excrescence. [Gets book and reads]. Now it came to pass that Mordechai the Jew over heard Bigtan and Teresh plotting to kill the immense and exaltatious pomposity King Ahashverosh

Ahashverosh: [To servant and pleased with himself] That's me you know. Wait a minute. That chappie Mordechai. He saved my life. Did we ever reward him.

Servant 3: No your pedantic flatulosity.

Ahashverosh: Which of my sycophantic advisers is on call tonight.

Servant 4: I think I saw that slimy one you like so much – Haman – in the courtyard.

Ahashverosh: Oh good. Yes he'll do. A bit oily but effective. [calling loudly] Haman. Haaamaaann. Oh where is he. He does tend to creep up behind one and it always gives me a bit of a start.

[coming down to front of stage]

Tell you what boys and girls – if you see Haman come into my bedroom would you shout out.

[Enter Haman behind the king for the 'behind you shtick'. Eventually they discover each other.]

Haman: [Behind the king and softly] Yes your splendiferous splendidness.

Ahashverosh: [jumps] Oh! You made me jump. You do slither about so sometimes Haman.

Haman: Forgive me my liege.

Ahashverosh: Forgiven. I am so forgiving aren't I? Anyway. Look what should I do for a man I particularly wish to honour?

Haman: [Aside] He must mean me. He usually does. [To king] Why you should let them put on your best suit and ride your best horse through the city led by one of your noble ministers who will proclaim to all "this is done for the man the king wishes to honour". [Aside again] This should be good – I look so good on a horse.

Ahashverosh: Very well – do this for Mordechai the Jew.

Haman: Mordechai?!!! Mordechai?!!!

Ahashverosh: Mordechai.

Haman: But surely you cannot be serious.

Ahashverosh: Yes I can, and stop calling me Shirley.

Haman: [Dejectedly] Yes my lugubriousness.

[Exit all]

Megillah: So Haman took the clothes and dressed Mordechai in them and then led him through the streets of Shushan on the king's best horse and proclaimed to all "this is done for the man the king wishes to honour". And Haman returned home downcast and depressed. So the time came for Queen Esther's feast and Haman went to enjoy his meal. Or so he thought....

Scene 7

[Enter Esther, Ahashverosh and Haman and sit around the table eating and drinking and guards by the door]

Ahashverosh: [Clearly a little the worse for drink] Not a bad feast eh Haman?

Haman: A wonderful one Oh omnipotent impotence.

Ahashverosh: And Esther – not a bad bit of crumpet eh Haman?

Haman: As wise as she is beautiful gracious lord.

Ahashverosh: [to Esther] You are a wonderful wife Esther. I want to do something for you., Anything. Name it and it is yours even if it is half my kingdom.

Esther: Oh great King. If you love and favour me, give me my life.

Ahashverosh: But you lovely woman no-one is threatening to take it.

Esther: Yes my lord someone is. And not just my life, but the life of all my people. We have been sold to be murdered and the man that persecutes us and wishes to have me murdered does not care.

Ahashverosh: Who dares to do this to you.

Esther: That man is sitting next to you now. [Forcefully] That man is Haman. I am a Jewess and it is he who has plotted to take my life, that of my Uncle Mordechai who you recently honoured, and all the Jews who live peacefully in your kingdom.

Ahashverosh: [Angrily] Haman. Haman you are an evil wicked man. I never liked you. All that smarmyness and slyness. You will be taken away and be done away with forthwith. Guards.

Guards take him away. [goes to Esther and embraces her] There now Esther. It's all put right. You know after our feast and all that fuss I rather fancy something sweet to eat. How about a piece of cake. Can you rustle up something hat shaped that tastes good and reminds me of this moment.

Meggillah: And so Haman was done away with, and, at the orders of the King, by the hand of Mordechai now his chief minister, so were all the other plotters. And the king honoured and protected the Jews throughout his kingdom. And Mordechai recorded these events and sent letters to all of the Jews living throughout the provinces instructing them to celebrate Purim every year on the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar and remember how this month had been transformed for them from a time that should have been for sorry and great sadness to one of great joy, from mourning to festivity, to make them days of feasting, rejoicing, giving food to one another and giving gifts to the poor. And Mordechai was honoured by the king and loved by his people and spoke peace for all their descendants.

And that's the whole Megillah – well almost!