






The Story of Esther




Long, long ago, in a country called Persia there lived a king named Achashveyrosh and a queen named Vashti. The king ordered his wife to appear before him at a banquet but she refused. The king was furious and ordered that she be put to death.





King Achashveyrosh wasn't happy long without a queen, so he ordered a search across the kingdom for a beautiful girl to be his queen. From among hundreds of girls he chose Esther, a cousin of Mordechai, a leader of the Jews at that time. Mordechai advised Esther not to tell the king that she was Jewish.






The King's Prime Minister was an evil man named Haman. Haman decided that as he was so important everyone should bow to him. Mordechai refused. Haman was very angry and asked the King to make a royal ruling to kill all the Jews. Haman drew lots to decide when this was to happen. The chosen date was to be 13th Adar.








Mordechai heard about Haman's evil plan. He sent Esther a message telling her what Haman was plotting and asked her to go to the King on behalf of all the Jewish people.





Esther was afraid. No **1** could **C** the king without being invited by him. She fasted and prayed for three days, plucked up her courage and went **2C** the king. King Achashveyrosh was ha  to see her and offered her up to half of his kingdom. All she asked was that the King and Haman    her for dinner that .





As they were drinking  the king again asked Esther what was her request. Esther replied that the king and Ha  should attend again the follo  evening **4** another banquet.

Haman was very pleased that he had  asked to dine with Achashveyrosh and Esther for **2** nights in a row. But then he  Mordechai at the king's  and Mordechai still refused **2** bow **2** him. Haman was filled with rage. He decided that very night **2** build a gallows on  to hang Mordechai, and he planned to speak to the king about it the very next day.

That same  the king could not sleep. He ordered his  of Chronicles to be read to him. The book was opened to a day when Mordechai had helped    the King's life. The King asked what reward Mordechai had received and was told that nothing had been done for him.

The next morning, just as Haman was about to ask that Mordechai be hanged, the king asked Haman, "What should  done for the  whom the king wants to honour?" Haman, still filled with  -**B**+**P**, mi  only thought the king  -**T**+**M** him. So he answered, "Let the man be dressed in the king's royal robes and be  -**B**+**L** through the city streets on the king's . Let them call out, 'This is what is done for the man who the king wants to honour!'"

Imagine Haman's  +  when the King commanded, "Go at once. Get the  -**W****A****R****D** and the horse and do as you have suggested for Mordechai the Jew." Haman obeyed the king but was incredibly un .

That evening, at the **2**nd banquet,  -**J** finally told the king that she was Jewish. She begged the king to save her  ple. The king was furious with Haman and ordered that he be  on the gallows that he had built for Mordechai. Haman's pride and  -**A**+**TY** had led to his own destruction and the brave Queen Esther had saved her people.