

# The Story of Esther



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There was a time when Jews lived in a country called Persia which was ruled by King Xerxes. The king had a beautiful queen named Vashti who he wished to show off to all the men in his court. Vashti refused to be shown off by the king and, full of fury at being disobeyed, he decided to find a new queen to replace her.



Esther was a young and very beautiful Jewish orphan who had been brought up as a daughter by her cousin Mordecai. The king decided that Esther, out of all the women in his kingdom should be his new queen. Mordecai instructed her to not reveal that she was a Jew.



Sitting at the king's gate one day, Mordecai overheard two palace officers plotting to kill King Xerxes. He sent a warning to King Xerxes and saved his life. Because of this, Mordecai's name was written in the Royal Record Book.



Mordecai had an enemy close to the king named Haman. Haman disliked Mordecai because he refused to bow to him whenever Haman passed by. Mordecai would only bow to God.



Haman was so angry with Mordecai that he tricked the king into passing a law that on a certain date Mordecai and all the other Jews in Persia would be put to death!



It was very dangerous for Esther to approach the king without his permission, but Mordecai told her she had been put close to the king by God, especially to save the Jews. Esther came up with a plan and invited the king and Haman to a banquet the next day.



Haman was impatient to have Mordecai killed before all the other Jews, so he set up a gallows and planned to ask the king the next day to have Mordecai hanged there.





That night the king could not sleep and asked to hear the Royal Record Book read aloud. He realised that Mordecai had never been rewarded for saving his life. The next day, the king asked Haman, "What should be done for a man the king delights to honour?" Haman, thinking the king was talking about himself, painted a rich picture of all the honours that should be given to him.



Pleased with Haman's suggestions, the king ordered him to go and arrange all these honours for Mordecai. Mordecai was given the king's horse and robe and Haman was forced to lead him through the streets for all to see. Haman was humiliated!



Later that day, Haman and the king went to Esther's banquet. The king was so pleased with her that he openly agreed to grant any request she made. Esther then told the king about Haman's plot to kill her people and asked him to save them. "Hang Haman!" the king called in fury.



And so, Haman was defeated and the king passed a new law that saved the Jews from their fate. Mordecai took Haman's place as the king's favourite. God did all this through the beautiful Queen Esther.

