

PRODUCTION SCRIPT



by Lori Jacobs

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by Jewish Theatre Grand Rapids.

Performances: Jan 30, Feb 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 2025.

Destroy following performances.



Newport, Maine

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ESTHER: THE MUSICAL SCHPIEL

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Order Number 3103a

CAST (6M 2F + ensemble)

Esther -- Our heroine. A teenage Jewish woman who becomes the Queen of Persia and saves the Jewish people from annihilation.

Mordecai -- Esther's second-cousin twice-removed. Ten or fifteen years older than Esther. A pious Jew who has raised Esther after her parents died. A mench.

Haman -- The evil villain.

Ahasuerus (Ah-haa-shoe-air-us) -- The King of Persia. A bumbler.

Vashti -- Ahasuerus' proud Queen who will always be the Queen, no matter what.

Hegai (Hey-Guy) -- The head eunuch in charge of just about everything.

Bigthan & Teresh -- Royal chefs who plot to kill the King

Female Chorus -- Handmaidens to the Queen, Beauty Contestants, Haman's entourage, tap dancers, Za-Za

Male Chorus -- Guards, Haman's entourage, Tap dancers, Butinskis, Princes

NOTE: The play could be done with as few as six male and six female chorus members who will play several roles. However, the more, the merrier!

SETTING -- Inside and Outside the Palace at Shushan, Persia. The stage could be divided into several platforms of various levels. The King's throne is upstage center on the highest platform. Somewhere near mid-stage center, two palace gates are designated. Initially, stage right is the King's chambers where the men are having a party, and stage left is the Queen's chambers where the women are having a party. The men and women do not see each other. As each group sings and dances, they utilize the downstage areas, and the lights are down on the other group.

TIME -- About 483 B.C.E.

ESTHER -- The Musical Spoof by Lori Jacobs 5M 2W 1 either m or f, plus ensemble of 6m 6f. About 2 hours. Various settings. The classic Biblical story with a twist. With a score made up of original songs based on Kletzmer Songs, Rap, Showtunes and even a little Country and Pop, this show is a rapid, surefire, farcical, tongue-in-cheek-retelling of the rise of Esther and her salvation of the Jews in Persia. Come join the party!

Order # 3103

Lori Jacobs was born in Detroit with a passion for all things creative and the fervor to perform them. She began writing plays and songs as a child. Always involved in music, theater, and the arts, Lori began singing professionally while teaching elementary school. Following the 1972 Capitol Records' release of Free, her first album of original songs, Lori toured the country as a wandering troubadour at colleges and coffee houses and sang in local venues in the Detroit area for twenty years, where she was also involved in community theater. In 1998, Lori moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where she became active in community theater as an actor, playwright, and theater administrator. In 2008, Lori received a Grand Award nomination for best actress for her portrayal of Golda Meier in *Golda's Balcony*. Her original children's musical, *Little Red Riding Hood*, was produced in Grand Rapids in February 2004, and *Esther, The Musical*, directed by Len Robinson, was world premiered by Jewish Theater Grand Rapids in June 2006. It was nominated for a Grand Award for Best Musical of 2006.

Musical Numbers

ACT ONE

#1 -- Drink, Drink, Drink	Hegai, Captain and Company
#2 -- We're Having A Party	Women
#3 -- I'm The Queen	Vashti & Women
#4 -- Exalted King	Ahasuerus
#5 -- The Decree	Esther & Mordecai
#6 -- Mordecai's Lament	Mordecai
#7 -- The Visit	Mordecai & Esther
#8 -- Beauty Contest / Wedding	Beauty Contestants, Ahasuerus, Esther, Hegai & Company
#9 -- The Plot	Teresh & Bigthan
#10 -- Power	Haman & Entourage
#11 -- We Don't Bow Down	Mordecai, The Jews, Hegai
#12 -- The Rally	Haman & Company
#13 -- Shema Kolenu	Hegai & Jews

ACT TWO

#14 -- My Sister	Esther, Mordecai, Hegai, Vashti
#15 -- What Will You Do?	Esther & Handmaidens
#16 -- What Will You Do? (reprise)	Hegai
#17 -- Drink, Drink, Drink, (CHASE)	
#18 -- Climb Up	Vashti, Handmaidens, Esther
#19 -- The King Can't Sleep	Ahasuerus, Haman, Hegai
#20 -- Hail, Hail Mordecai	Haman & Company
#21 -- The Plot (CHASE)	
#22 -- I Should Be Happy	Hegai, Mordecai, Esther, Vashti, Ahasuerus
#23 -- He Tried To Kill Us	Company

ACT I

(Lights up on HEGAI. As HEGAI gives this opening speech, the men and women enter by twos and threes and take their places. The introduction to DRINK, DRINK, DRINK is played under HEGAI'S speech)

HEGAI: Welcome. My name is Hegai. I'm the Head Eunuch here at the palace in charge of just about everything. The year is about 483 B.C.E, and the only means of communication is word of mouth. So if you would be so kind, please turn off all modern communication devices. No texting! I hope you haven't researched the story of Esther before coming tonight, for it's completely unnecessary. This is a farce – a schpiel – It's fun! Part of the fun of the story of Esther is hissing and booing at Haman, the worst of all villains. As your host, I shall assist you. When you see this sign *(Holds up or points to HISS-BOO sign)*, you must hiss and boo with gusto! Let's try. *(Sign appears. Ad lib-cheerleading audience)*. All right, let us try once more. Haman enters and the sign goes up and you hiss and boo with gusto!

(HAMAN enters with ZA-ZA on his arms. He freezes. SIGNHOLDER holds up the HISS-BOO sign. Audience hisses and boos.)

The sign goes down and you stop!

(Sign goes down. Audience stops.)

Wonderful!

(HAMAN kisses and parts with ZA-ZA, and joins the men's party. ZA-ZA joins the women's party.)

Our King is Ahasuerus.

(AHASUERUS enters. All the men bow down to him.)

In the third year of his reign over all of Persia, the King prepared a feast for all the leaders of the provinces. At the same time, his Queen Vashti prepared a feast for the women. These parties lasted for six months! Never before had the world seen such gluttonous amounts of lavish food or enormous amounts of wine.

(The scene opens on AHASUERUS' party. The men are drinking and brawling, laughing and bragging, and telling stories of their great bravery. BIGTHAN and TERESH are dashing around with trays of food and drink.)

MUSICAL #1 -- DRINK, DRINK, DRINK

HEGAI:

WE'RE GATHERED HERE TOGETHER FOR A HALF A YEAR
THE LEADERS OF THE PROVINCES FROM FAR AND NEAR
WHO CARES THAT THE WORLD IS SPINNING
FORTUNES LOST OR LIFE BEGINNING
ROLL THE DICE AND KEEP ON WINNING
LONG AS THERE'S A PARTY WE'LL STAY HERE

MEN:

AND SO ALL HAIL AHASUERUS AND HIS ROYAL BIRTH

HEGAI:

NO ONE CAN TELL JUST HOW MUCH HE'S WORTH
BUT HE'S SPENDING ALL HIS MONEY LIKE A DRUNKEN CLOWN

MEN:

SO RAISE YOUR GLASS AND DRINK YOUR LIQUOR DOWN

DRINK, DRINK, DRINK 'TILL OUR EYES TURN RED
'TILL WE FALL ON THE FLOOR AND HOLD OUR HEAD
DRINK, DRINK, DRINK 'TILL THE PARTY'S DONE
FORGET YOUR TROUBLES, DRINK AND JUST HAVE FUN

HAMAN:

THREE YEARS AGO THE KING INHERITED THE THRONE
THE GREATEST KINGDOM THAT THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN
ALL HIS LIFE HE'S BEEN A DRINKER
NEVER LEARNED TO BE A THINKER
TREATED OTHERS LIKE A STINKER
NEVER ANY WISDOM HAS HE SHOWN

HAMAN AND BUTINSKIs:

BUT HE'S THE KING, HE'S THE KING, AND WE ALL AGREE
TO HIS FACE WE'LL RESPECT HIM AND HE'LL NEVER SEE
THAT WE THINK THAT HE'S A BUMBLER UNDERNEATH HIS CROWN

MEN:

SO RAISE YOUR GLASS AND DRINK YOUR LIQUOR DOWN
DRINK, DRINK, DRINK 'TILL OUR EYES TURN RED
'TILL WE FALL ON THE FLOOR AND HOLD OUR HEAD
DRINK, DRINK, DRINK 'TILL THE PARTY'S DONE
FORGET YOUR TROUBLES, DRINK AND JUST HAVE FUN

MUSIC BREAK (Men dance)

MEN:

DRINK, DRINK, DRINK 'TILL OUR EYES TURN RED
'TILL WE FALL ON THE FLOOR AND HOLD OUR HEAD
DRINK, DRINK, DRINK 'TILL THE PARTY'S DONE
FORGET YOUR TROUBLES, DRINK AND JUST HAVE FUN

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS:

TO ALL THE MEN OF PERSIA WHO ARE BRAVE AND BOLD

WHO WON THE MIGHTY BATTLES FOR THE KING OF OLD
THIS IS OUR REWARD FOR FIGHTING
FOREIGN LANDS ARE SO INVITING
CONQUERING IS SO EXCITING
AND WE DO IT ALL FOR LAND AND GOLD

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS AND BUTINSKIs:

AND SO WE BOAST AND WE BRAG AND WE TELL OUR LIES
TO THE PAIN OF THE WORLD WE ALL CLOSE OUR EYES

MEN:

‘CAUSE THERE’S NEVER ANY TROUBLE IN OUR SHUSHAN TOWN
SO RAISE YOUR GLASS AND DRINK YOUR LIQUOR DOWN
DRINK, DRINK, DRINK ‘TILL OUR EYES TURN RED
‘TILL WE FALL ON THE FLOOR AND HOLD OUR HEAD
DRINK, DRINK, DRINK ‘TILL THE PARTY’S DONE
FORGET YOUR TROUBLES, DRINK AND JUST HAVE FUN, YES!
FORGET YOUR TROUBLES DRINK AND JUST HAVE FUN

(Men laugh and drink, etc.)

GUEST #1: This party needs women! Dancing women! Beautiful dancing women!

GUEST #2: You are right, my friend! Too bad the most beautiful dancing women in the world are in Media.

GUEST #3: You are wrong, my friend! The most beautiful women are here in Persia!

AHASUERUS: I, the KING, will tell you: My Queen Vashti is the most beautiful woman in the world. And she’s no Persian or Medianite. She is a Chaldean woman, the daughter and granddaughter and great-granddaughter of royalty, and none of you have ever seen a woman more beautiful. And she can dance! I will show you! Hegai [Hey Guy]!! Go fetch Vashti from her party and have her come here wearing nothing but her royal crown. I want her to dance before my guests. I want all the men at this party to see what a beautiful Queen I have.

(HEGAI bows to the KING, and exits. Lights open on VASHTI’S party.)

MUSICAL #2 -- WE’RE HAVING A PARTY

ALL THE WOMEN:

WE’RE HAVING A PARTY
WE’RE TRYING ON CLOTHES
WE’RE PLAYING WITH MAKEUP
WE’RE PAINTING OUR TOES

AND WE CAN THANK VASHTI
OUR GENEROUS QUEEN
SHE’S GIVING A PARTY

LIKE WE'VE NEVER SEEN

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA

WE'RE LAUGHING AND SINGING
WE'RE DRINKING OUR WINE
WE'RE SPREADING THE GOSSIP
WE'RE DANCING IN LINE

AND WE CAN THANK VASHTI
FOR FOOTING THE BILL
FOR SERVING US TRIFLES
FOR LAMB ON THE GRILL

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA

OH, VASHTI NOW WE STOP
AND SING OUR PRAISES ALL TO YOU
A WOMAN WE ADMIRE
A LOVELY QUEEN SO PROUD AND TRUE

THANK YOU FOR THIS PARTY
THANK YOU FOR THIS PARTY
THANK YOU VASHTI FOR THIS LOVELY PARTY

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA

WE'RE HAVING A PARTY
SO SILLY AND FUN
WITH NO MEN TO TELL US
WHAT WE MUST GET DONE

AND WE CAN THANK VASHTI
FOR SETTING US FREE
THERE'S NO ONE LIKE VASHTI
AND THERE'LL NEVER BE

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA,.....

(HEGAI enters)

HEGAI: My Queen, the King has ordered that you be brought to his party wearing only your royal crown so that you may dance for him and his guests.

VASHTI: Only my royal crown!?

(HEGAI nods yes with trepidation.)

What? He dares to ask me to leave my party and dance for a room full of drunken commoners?

WOMAN #1: Oh, my Queen! You cannot dance before all his brawling guests. You will be treated like a tramp!

ALL WOMEN: A tramp!

WOMEN #2: They will leer and laugh at you.

ALL WOMEN: Leer and laugh!

WOMAN #3: They will shout out vulgar things to you!

ALL WOMEN: Vulgar things!

VASHTI: I will not be treated like some common harlot!

ALL WOMEN: Common harlot!

MUSICAL #3 -- I'M THE QUEEN

VASHTI:

YOU CAN TELL THAT DRUNKEN BOOR I SAID, "NO WAY!"
I'LL NOT BE DANCING FOR HIS ROWDY CROWD TODAY
WHAT NERVE TO THINK THAT JUST UPON A WHIM
I'D DROP MY FRIENDS AND RUN TO DANCE FOR HIM

JUST LOOK AROUND – MY PARTY'S GOING GREAT
THERE'S FOOD AND DRINK ON EVERY WOMAN'S PLATE
WE'RE DANCING AND WE'RE ROASTING UP A LAMB
AND I AM STAYING HERE RIGHT WHERE I AM
I'M THE QUEEN

WOMEN:

SHE'S THE QUEEN, SHE'S THE QUEEN, SHE'S THE QUEEN
UPON HER HEAD SHE WEARS THE ROYAL CROWN
SHE'S THE QUEEN, SHE'S THE QUEEN, SHE'S THE QUEEN
NO DRUNKEN FOOL CAN ORDER HER AROUND
SHE'S THE QUEEN!

VASHTI:

I AM NOT SOME LITTLE TRAMP FROM OFF THE STREET
I HAVE SERVANTS WHO ARE BEGGING JUST TO WASH MY FEET
THE KLEZMER BAND IS WAITING IN THE HALL
AND THERE'S NO WAY THAT I WILL LEAVE THIS BALL

I AM THE QUEEN. I AM THE KING'S RIGHT HAND
A HUNDRED SLAVES WAIT JUST FOR MY COMMAND
SO TAKE THIS MESSAGE RIGHT BACK DOWN THE HALL
I'M NOT SOME HAREM BABE AT BECK AND CALL
I'M THE QUEEN!

WOMEN:

SHE'S THE QUEEN, SHE'S THE QUEEN, SHE'S THE QUEEN
SHE'S STRONG AND STANDING UP FOR WHAT IS RIGHT
SHE'S THE QUEEN, SHE'S THE QUEEN, SHE'S THE QUEEN
I THINK WE'RE IN FOR QUITE A ROYAL FIGHT
SHE'S THE QUEEN!

VASHTI:

I'LL NOT BE DANCING FOR THAT CROWD TONIGHT.
I'M THE QUEEN!

WOMEN:

SHE'S THE QUEEN, SHE'S THE QUEEN, SHE'S THE QUEEN

VASHTI:

I'M THE QUEEN, I'M THE QUEEN, I'M THE QUEEN!
(Blackout on VASHTI'S chambers. Lights up on HEGAI.)

HEGAI: As you can imagine, when I told King Ahasuerus that Vashti refused to come and dance for him, the King was greatly embarrassed and incensed, and his fury burned within him.

(Lights up on KING's chambers. Hegai joins the King's chambers.)

AHASUERUS: I am greatly embarrassed and incensed! My fury burns within me!

BUTINSKI #1: My King, you cannot allow this disobedience to go unnoticed.

BUTINSKI #2: Why, if the women find out that Vashti said "no" to the King, no man in the kingdom will be able to control his wife!

MAN #1: That's right! We can't allow this!

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD: You must do something! The honor of all the men in your Kingdom is at stake.

AHASUERUS: *(To Hegai)* Hegai, get Haman. He will tell me what I should do.

HEGAI: *(Shouting)* Oh, Haman!!!! The king wants you!

(HAMAN enters carrying a large goblet of wine in one hand and holding ZA-ZA in the other. He freezes. HISS-BOO sign. HAMAN kisses ZA-ZA and gives her the goblet. They part. HAMAN approaches and bows to AHASUERUS)

HAMAN: *(In the sweetest of voices)* What can I do for you, Your Royalness?

AHASUERUS: Haman, I called for Vashti to come and dance for my guests. And she has refused me! What shall I do?

HAMAN: *(Aside)* Ah, ha! This is my opportunity to get rid of Queen Vashti, who has never liked me!

(To the KING)

Queen Vashti has committed an offense not only against you, Your Royalness, but against all the men in your Kingdom. If Queen Vashti can say “no” to the most powerful King in the world, all women will think that they can disobey their husbands!

AHASUERUS: You think? What should I do?

HAMAN: My King, you must quashti Vashti!

AHASUERUS: Great idea! Guards!! Quashti Vashti!

(Guards bow and leave. Lights go down on KING's chambers. Spot on HEGAI)

HEGAI: So Vashti was sent to live in the East Wing in the concubine chambers.

(Lights up on VASHTI, surrounded by the women)

VASHTI: Ha! He thinks that's a PUNISHMENT?!

(HANDMAIDENS laugh.)

No matter what he says or where he makes me live, I come from Royal Blood and I shall always be the Queen. What a relief! I still have my dignity, and I never have to service -- er, see . . him again! C'mon, Ladies, let's finish our party, and then you can all help me move my stuff to the East Wing!

(HANDMAIDENS laugh and follow VASHTI. Blackout. Spot on HEGAI)

HEGAI: One year later.

(Lights up on KING's chambers. AHASUERUS is sitting on the throne. A bottle of Jack Daniels in his hand. He is surrounded by people bowing and scraping, pleading with him for favors, giving him advice. The LITTLE PRINCE rushes into the chambers.)

LITTLE PRINCE: *(Out of breath)* Oh, my Royal King! I must speak to you. It's an emergency!

AHASUERUS: What??? How dare you come into the King's chambers without my permission! Everybody knows that's totally forbidden! Guards! Take this creature away and impale him on a stake outside my window so I can watch him suffer while he dies.

(Ahasuerus takes a drink from his bottle. Everyone gasps and backs away from the King)

LITTLE PRINCE: *(As he is being carried out of the room)* But, daaaaaaaddy! ("daddy"). Don't you think that's a little haaaaaaaarshhhhhhhh? ("harsh")

AHASUERUS: What a whiner! I never liked that kid. He's worse than his mother! I like that other Prince, Vashti's son, better. What's his name?

(Pauses)

That's enough for today! Everybody out of my sight. Right now! I am tired of your constant presence!

(Everyone leaves except for HEGAI and three guards. AHASUERUS takes a drink and rises from the throne. BUTINSKIS sneak in during the song and join in the chorus)

MUSICAL #4-- EXALTED KING

AHASUERUS:

WHEN YOU ARE THE EXALTED KING

YOU HAVE TOO MANY PEOPLE AROUND YOU

SURROUND YOU LEFT AND RIGHT ALL NIGHT AND DAY
THEY'RE BOWING AND THEY'RE BEGGING
AND LYING, TRYING TO PLEASE ME
HOPING THAT I'LL SHINE MY ROYAL LIGHT THEIR WAY

THERE'S NO ONE THAT I CAN REALLY TRUST
WHOSE MOTIVES I CAN BELIEVE IN
EVEN BEHIND MY BACK THEY WHEEL AND DEAL
JUST LIKE BEES IN HONEY
THEY'RE STICKING CLOSE TO MY MONEY
BUT NO ONE REALLY CARES ABOUT THE WAY I FEEL
(HEGAI, GUARDS, and BUTINSKIs join in background harmony)
OH, WOE IS THE LIFE OF A KING. (WOE IS THE LIFE)
IT'S NOT ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE. (CRACKED UP TO BE)
YOU THINK YOU CAN HAVE EVERYTHING (AHH, OOH, EVERYTHING)
BUT WHERE IS THE LOVE JUST FOR ME? (WHERE IS THE LOVE JUST FOR ME)

WHEN YOU ARE THE EXALTED KING
YOU HAVE SO MANY WOMEN TO CHOOSE FROM
HOW I USED TO LOVE VARIETY
NEVER ANY NEED FOR TALKING (TALKING)
I JUST POINT MY FINGER AND PICK ONE (PICK ONE)
NEVER ASK HER NAME OR NATIONALITY (AHHHH)

OH, WOE IS THE LIFE OF A KING. (WOE IS THE LIFE)
IT'S NOT ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE (THE POOR KING)
YOU THINK YOU CAN HAVE EVERYTHING (AHH, OOH, EVERYTHING)
BUT WHERE IS THE LOVE JUST FOR ME (WHERE IS THE LOVE)

NOW I SEE (HE CAN SEE). NOW I SEE (HE CAN SEE)
I HAVE WASTED ALL MY LIFE (AHH, AHH, OOH, WASTED LIFE)
HOW I BLEED (SEE HIM BLEED) WITH THIS NEED (FULL OF NEED)
AND IT CUTS ME LIKE A KNIFE (AHH, OOH, CUTS HIM LIKE A KNIFE)

AND IF I'M TO LIVE MY BEST (VERY BEST)
I MUST START A ROYAL QUEST (ROYAL QUEST, ROYAL QUEST)
SEARCH THIS KINGDOM EAST AND WEST (EAST AND WEST)
FOR MY WIFE. (SEARCH THE KINGDOM FOR HIS WIFE)

ESTHER: The Musical Schpiel -- by Lori Jacobs

(AHASUERUS notices that the BUTINKSIs have joined him.)

AHASUERUS: *(To the BUTINSKIs)* What are you doing here? I didn't invite you! Guards! Take them to the dungeon!

BUTINSKI #1: *(As the guards lead them away)* But, Your Royalness, we just wanted to sing!

BUTINSKI #2: We just wanted to sing!

AHASUERUS: *(To HEGAI)* I now issue a decree that you will post over my entire Kingdom. My Royal Guards are ordered to locate and bring to the Palace the most beautiful young unmarried women so that I can pick one for my wife and Queen.

(HEGAI bows and exits as lights fade on King's Chambers. MORDECAI is standing at downstage left. ESTHER runs up, carrying a basket of clothes and the decree. Intro to THE DECREE begins as she runs in)

ESTHER: *(Excited, as she runs up to Mordecai.)* Second-cousin twice removed, Mordecai! Second-cousin-twice removed Mordecai!

MORDECAI: What is it Esther?

MUSICAL # 5 -- THE DECREE

ESTHER:

COUSIN MORDECAI, WAIT 'TILL YOU SEE
THE KING HAS POSTED A NEW DECREE
IT SAYS RIGHT HERE THAT HE'S STARTED A QUEST
AND HE'S SEARCHING THE KINGDOM 'TILL HE FINDS THE BEST
AND MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL TO BE QUEEN

MORDECAI:

OH, ESTHER, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

ESTHER:

HERE'S THE REMARKABLE TWIST:
MY NAME IS RIGHT THERE ON THE LIST!

MORDECAI:

ESTHER, WHAT IS THAT YOU SAY?
HAND ME THAT DECREE!

ESTHER:

LOOK, IT SAYS TODAY'S THE DAY
THE ROYAL GUARDS WILL COME FOR ME

COUSIN MORDECAI, THINK OF THE FUN
TO LIVE IN THE PALACE FROM SUN TO SUN
WEARING FINE CLOTHES MADE OF LACE AND BROCADE
AND THE JEWELS AND THE FOOD AND A PERSONAL MAID

WHO WILL DO EVERYTHING JUST FOR ME!

MORDECAI:

BUT ESTHER, YOU WON'T BE FREE!

ESTHER:

WHAT AN ADVENTURE IN LIFE
I COULD EVEN BECOME A KING'S WIFE!

MORDECAI, BE GLAD FOR ME
AND DON'T BE AFRAID
ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY
THE KING'S DECREE MUST BE OBEYED

MORDECAI:

I KNOW, ESTHER, BUT WHATEVER YOU DO
DON'T TELL ANYONE YOU ARE A JEW
WE JEWS ARE SCATTERED ALL OVER THE LAND
AND WE'RE LUCKY SO FAR THAT THEY'VE NOT RAISED A HAND
BUT IT'S BEST, I SUGGEST, TO LAY LOW

ESTHER:

I PROMISE I WON'T LET THEM KNOW
I'LL HIDE FROM THEM ALL THAT I AM
WHY, I MIGHT EVEN LEARN TO EAT HAM! HA!

(During this conversation, the music underscores.)

MORDECAI: Esther, this is not a joking matter! Once you are taken to the Palace, you will have to live there forever! If the King does not choose you to be his Queen, he will send you to live with the concubines!

ESTHER: Oh, Mordecai! My name is on the list! There is nothing I can do. But, I feel like this was meant to be my special fate! And what an exciting adventure!

(MORDECAI looks downcast.)

My cousin, don't worry.

(She hugs him.)

Oh, Mordecai. You've been so good to me. Since you took me into your home when mama and papa died, you've given me everything. I can never thank you enough. But now I must go and live my own life.

MORDECAI: Esther, I will come to the Palace Gates everyday. Try to befriend one of the eunuchs who can carry messages, and let me know how you are.

ESTHER: I will, cousin. I will get word to you somehow.

JUST KNOWING THAT YOU ARE THERE
WILL GIVE ME THE STRENGTH THAT I NEED.

(Two guards appear.)

NOW I SEE THEM, THE GUARDS AT THE GATE
READY TO CARRY ME TO MY FATE

I TAKE WITH ME ONLY THE CLOTHES THAT I WEAR
AND THE THINGS THAT YOU'VE TAUGHT ME TO LOVE AND TO CARE
AND I PUT CHILDISH DREAMS FAR BEHIND.
I HOPE THE KING WILL BE KIND.
THERE'S ACTUALLY NOTHING TO DREAD
MY FUTURE IS LYING AHEAD.

(ESTHER hugs MORDECAI and runs off to the waiting guards. MORDECAI stands looking after her.)

MUSICAL #6 -- MORDECAI'S LAMENT

MORDECAI:

LIKE THE BLOOM THAT FADES
RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYE
LIKE THE SHOOTING STAR
IN THE MIDNIGHT SKY
LIKE THE CREEPING DESERT SANDS
I HAVE LET LOVE FALL RIGHT THROUGH MY HANDS

MY LITTLE ESTHER
THIS IS TERRIBLE NEWS
WHY WOULD THE KING LOOK FOR HIS QUEEN
AMONG THE JEWS
MY DARLING ESTHER
MY HEART WANTS TO CRY
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WE MUST PART AND SAY
GOODBYE.

AND NOW THE PAIN
DEEP INSIDE
I WILL CARRY IT
AND I'LL ALWAYS HIDE
MY LOVE FOR YOU.

MY LOVELY ESTHER
WHY DID I WAIT SO LONG?
CONFESSING LOVE TO JUST A GIRL
WOULD BE SO WRONG
I DIDN'T SEE YOU

WERE ALREADY GROWN
AND NOW I'VE LOST THE ONLY LOVE
I'VE EVER KNOWN

BUT I'LL BE HERE
EVERY DAY
I WILL WAIT FOR YOU
BY THE PALACE WALL
I WILL WAIT FOR YOU

ESTHER, I NEVER TOLD YOU
HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU
AND IT'S TOO LATE NOW
ESTHER, IF I COULD HOLD YOU
HOW I WOULD LOVE YOU
THAT'S NOT MY FATE NOW
I'LL LIVE WITHOUT

MY LOVELY ESTHER
PLEASE BE SAFE EVERY DAY
AND KNOW THAT I AM HERE FOR YOU
ALONG THE WAY
OH, PRECIOUS ESTHER,
MY LIFE'S TORN APART
FOR YOU WILL ALWAYS BE THE QUEEN WHO
RULES MY HEART.

(MORDECAI crosses over to the palace gates.)

HEGAI: Every day Mordecai went to the Palace gates hoping that Esther could sneak down for a visit.

MORDECAI: I hope that Esther can sneak down for a visit.

(HEGAI and ESTHER appear through the gates from inside the Palace. ESTHER and MORDECAI embrace in a welcome. HEGAI discretely steps away so that they can visit.)

MUSICAL # 7 -- THE VISIT

MORDECAI:

ESTHER, GOOD DAY TO YOU
HAVE YOU SOME NEWS TO TELL?
HOW HIS YOUR LIFE TODAY?

I HOPE ALL IS GOING WELL

ESTHER: Oh, cousin! It's not what I thought it would be!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING HERE

IT'S SUCH A STRANGE AND CRAZY LIFE

LIVING TOGETHER IN A ROOM FULL OF WOMEN

WHO ALL WANT TO BE THE SAME MAN'S WIFE

AND ALL OF US KNOW TOO WELL

ONLY ONE CAN BE THE QUEEN

HARD TO BE FRIENDS WITH AN ENDING LIKE THAT

I FEEL ALL ALONE

ONLY ONE LITTLE JOY

THESE PRECIOUS MOMENTS WHEN WE CAN CHAT

MORDECAI:

ESTHER, I UNDERSTAND

AND YOU I DO SALUTE

THROUGH ALL THESE TRYING TIMES

BE STEADFAST AND RESOLUTE

ESTHER: I'll try my best!

ALL DAY LONG HEGAI TEACHES US

THE WAY TO WALK, AND WHAT TO SAY

HOW TO WEAR MAKEUP AND TO ACT WITH A KING

THAT HE SAYS WE'LL BE READY TO MEET SOME DAY

I WISH I COULD BE WITH YOU

STROLLING THE STREETS AGAIN

CHATting WITH YOU AS WE SHOP IN THE FAIR

INSTEAD, LOOK AT ME!

STUCK UNTIL WHO KNOWS WHEN!

LEARNING FORTY WAYS I CAN BRAID MY HAIR

MORDECAI:

HEGAI WILL CARE FOR YOU

HE BRINGS YOU TO MY SIDE

TRUST HIM AND YOU'LL BE FINE

IN HEGAI YOU CAN CONFIDE

ESTHER: I know! He's the best!

HEGAI HAS BECOME MY GOOD FRIEND

HE HELPS ME IN SO MANY WAYS

WITHOUT HIM THERE I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO

BUT I DEARLY MISS THOSE GOOD OLD DAYS

ESTHER AND MORDECAI:

I THINK OF IT EVERYDAY
STROLLING THE STREETS OF TOWN
CHATTING WITH YOU IN THE FRESH MORNING AIR
INSTEAD, LOOK AT US
STEALING SOME TIME TO MEET
HARD TO ACCEPT IT BUT LIFE'S NOT FAIR

(DANCE)

MORDECAI:

I'LL WAIT HERE EVERYDAY
JUST FOR YOUR FACE TO SEE
FORTUNES MAY COME AND GO
YOU CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON ME

ESTHER:

YOU'RE THE BRIGHT LIGHT IN EVERY DAY
WITHOUT YOU HERE, I'D FALL APART
IF IT'S MY FATE THAT I BE CHOSEN AS QUEEN
I WILL SEE THAT YOU ALWAYS STAY CLOSE TO MY HEART

MORDECAI:

I'LL WAIT HERE EVERYDAY
JUST FOR YOUR FACE TO SEE
FORTUNES MAY COME AND GO
YOU CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON ME

ESTHER:

YOU'RE THE BRIGHT LIGHT IN EVERY DAY
WITHOUT YOU HERE, I'D FALL APART
IF IT'S MY FATE THAT I BE CHOSEN AS QUEEN
I WILL SEE THAT YOU ALWAYS STAY
CLOSE TO MY HEART

(They hug and ESTHER waves goodbye and goes back through the Palace Gates into the Palace with HEGAI.)

(Lights up on the Palace. The KING is sitting in the center, and all the townspeople are around him. The BEAUTY CONTESTANTS are lined up, and approach him one by one.)

MUSICAL # 8 -- BEAUTY CONTEST/NEW QUEEN/WEDDING & BANQUET

GARDENIA:

I'M GARDENIA
FROM ARMENIA
I'M THE BRIDE YOU SHOULD DESIRE

LUCINDA:

I'M LUCINDA

I'M FROM INDIA
I CAN SET YOUR HEART ON FIRE

SHEILA:

I'LL MAKE YOU FEEL AS YOUNG AS SUNRISE
LIGHT AS AIR

DIANA:

JUST BE CHOOSING ME, NOT CONFUSING ME
WITH THOSE HOMELY WOMEN OVER THERE!

LA-DAKA:

I'M LA-DAKA
FROM WEST MAKKA
I'M THE QUEEN YOU MUST AGREE

CONTESTANTS:

AHASUERUS, PLEASE CHOOSE ME!

[DANCE]

CONTESTANTS:

I'M THE QUEEN YOU MUST AGREE
AHASUERUS PLEASE CHOOSE ME!

(ESTHER appears before the KING)

AHASUERUS: *(Sees ESTHER. To audience)*

MY, OH, MY, WHAT A BEAUTY!
SUCH A SWEET, PETITE LITTLE CUTIE
SHE'LL PUT MY LONELY HEART RIGHT ON THE MEND

FLASHING EYES AND LIPS SO ROSEY
BEAUTIFUL FROM HEAD TO TOEY
THE SEARCH FOR MY NEW QUEEN IS AT AN END
(To ESTHER)

MY LITTLE CHICKADEE
YOU APPEAL TO ME
COME AND STAND BY MY SIDE
DOWN THE ROAD OF LIFE
YOU WILL BE MY WIFE
LET ALL PERSIA MEET MY BEAUTIFUL BRIDE

OF ALL THE FAIR MAIDS I HAVE MET HERE
YOU ARE BY FAR THE BEST ONE YET, DEAR

I'D LIKE YOU FOR MY LOVER AND MY FRIEND
THE SEARCH FOR MY NEW QUEEN IS AT AN END

BEAUTY CONTESTANTS:

SO SAD MY FRIEND
THE SEARCH FOR HIS NEW QUEEN IS AT AN END.

ESTHER: *(To the audience)*

OH, MY GOSH, THIS IS WILD
I STILL FEEL LIKE A LITTLE CHILD
I'M NOT READY FOR MY HAPPINESS TO END

UNEXPECTED AND SO ALARMING
HE MAY BE KING, BUT HE'S NO PRINCE CHARMING
I'LL HAVE TO SMILE AND JUST PRETEND

(To AHASUERUS)

OH, KING, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY
SUCH A HAPPY DAY
I'LL BE YOUR BRIDE
ALWAYS TRUE TO YOU
NEVER BLUE TO YOU

(Aside)

WON'T LET YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL INSIDE

(To AHASUERUS)

SO, RING THE BELLS AND POUR THE OUZO

(Aside)

SOME YOU WIN AND SOME YOU LOSE
OH, LIFE CAN SOMETIMES SEND YOU 'ROUND THE BEND
MY HAPPY CHILDHOOD DREAMS ARE AT AN END.

CONTESTANTS:

SO SAD MY FRIEND
MY HAPPY CHILDHOOD DREAMS ARE AT AN END.

AHASUERUS:

THAT SOUNDS GOOD. SO LET'S NOT TARRY
TODAY'S A VERY GOOD DAY TO MARRY
THE SEARCH FOR MY NEW QUEEN IS AT AN END
THE SEARCH FOR MY NEW QUEEN IS AT AN END

(As the BEAUTY CONTESTANTS sing the section below, everyone gets ready for the wedding. ESTHER and AHASUERUS are bedecked before us in their wedding clothes. At the end of the contestants' song, ESTHER and AHASUERUS are standing before HEGAI, who is now The HIGH PRIEST.)

CONTESTANTS:

OH, NO, NO, NO
WHY'D HE CHOOSE HER?
DOOMING ME TO CONCUBINEHOOD?
OH, WOE, WOE, WOE
I'M A LOSER
LIFE FOR ME WON'T GO SO GOOD.

OH, WELL, I'LL NEVER HAVE TO WORRY
ABOUT MY LIFE
THREE GOOD MEALS A DAY
LOTS OF TIME TO PLAY
LET DEAR ESTHER BE THE OLD MAN'S WIFE

SO, GATHER 'ROUND AND
BLESS THIS WEDDING
TO THE ALTER THEY ARE HEADING
THE SEARCH FOR HIS NEW QUEEN IS AT AN END.
HE'S NO PRINCE CHARMING
THE SEARCH FOR HIS NEW QUEEN IS AT AN END
WE'LL SEE YOU LATER
THE SEARCH FOR HIS NEW QUEEN IS AT AN END

HEGAI: (*Performing the wedding*)

WE ARE GATHERED HERE ON THIS SPECIAL DAY
FOR SOLEMN VOWS I WILL HEAR YOU SAY
TAKE HER HAND AND COME FORWARD
SIDE BY SIDE
THEN SAY, "I DO" AND YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE

ALL:

WE'RE HAVING A WEDDING
IN PERSIA TODAY
A NEW QUEEN WE'RE GETTING
WE HOPE THAT SHE'LL STAY
WE REALLY LIKE ESTHER
OUR BEAUTIFUL QUEEN
THERE'S NO ONE LIKE ESTHER
THAT WE'VE EVER SEEN

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA

SO, DRINK, DRINK, DRINK
'TILL OUR EYES TURN RED
'TILL WE FALL ON THE FLOOR
AND HOLD OUR HEAD
DRINK, DRINK, DRINK
'TILL THE PARTY'S DONE
FORGET YOUR TROUBLES
DRINK AND JUST HAVE FUN.

TAP DANCE -- *(as fast as the tappers can handle)*

(Everyone exits. Lights open on HEGAI at the side of the stage and MORDECAI standing before the Palace gates.)

HEGAI: Mordecai continued to wait by the palace gates for his daily gossip with Esther.

MORDECAI: I will wait right here for my daily gossip with Esther.

(BIGTHAN and TERESH, the Royal Chefs, enter downstage. They do not see MORDECAI)

MUSICAL # 9 -- THE PLOT

TERESH:

BIGTHAN, HAVE YOU GOT THE POISON?

BIGTHAN:

I DO. TERESH, WHAT FOOD WILL BE FED?

TERESH:

THE BREAD.

BIGTHAN AND TERESH:

AT DINNER WE'LL SERVE HIM THE BREAD AND THE WINE
BY EVENING THE KING WILL BE DEAD

OH, WE'RE OFF TO KILL THE KING
IT'S A MOST EXCITING THING
THE KING HAS GOT TO DIE – WE'VE MADE A PLOT
WE'RE BREAKING SACRED LAWS
TO SERVE A HIGHER CAUSE
AND RID DEAR PERSIA OF A KING WHO'S NOTHING BUT A SNOT

HIS TREATMENT OF VASHTI WE CANNOT FORGIVE
HOW CRUEL CAN A ROYAL KING BE?

AGREE!

THE KINGDOM WILL THANK US FOR DOING THIS DEED
PARTNERS IN CRIME, YOU AND ME

OH, WE'RE OFF THE KILL THE KING
WE CAN HEAR THE PEOPLE SING
THEIR VOICES LAUGHING, CHEERING IN THE STREET
HIS DAYS ARE AT AN END
I STAND WITH YOU, MY FRIEND
WE TWO GREAT CHEFS HAVE COOKED THE KING A TASTY, DEADLY TREAT

TERESH:

BIGTHAN, I TRUST YOU, DON'T FALTER

BIGTHAN:

I WON'T. TERESH, YOUR HAND MUST BE STILL

TERESH:

IT WILL

BIGTHAN AND TERESH:

WE'LL SERVE HIM HIS DINNER, AS WE ALWAYS DO
AND WAIT FOR THE POISON TO KILL

(DANCE)

BIGTHAN AND TERESH:

WE'LL SERVE HIM HIS DINNER, AS WE ALWAYS DO,
AND WAIT FOR THE POISON TO KILL. . .KILL

(BIGTHAN and TERESH exit)

MORDECAI: I must tell Esther to warn the King!

(ESTHER enters)

ESTHER: I must tell Hegai to warn the King!

(HEGAI enters)

HEGAI: I must warn the King.

(Lights up on AHASUERUS. HEGAI approaches him.)

HEGAI: My King, the lovely Queen Esther's second cousin twice removed Mordecai, overheard a plot against your life. The Royal Cooks, Bigthan and Teresh, were plotting to poison your bread and wine.

AHASUERUS: Is this true?

HEGAI: My King, Haman's investigation revealed that Bigthan and Teresh, did plot to kill you!

AHASUERUS: Impale them on a stake! And don't forget to write this down in the Book of Records.

(Pause)

That was pretty nice of Mordecai. Hegai, bring Haman to me!

HEGAI: *(Shouting)* Haman!!!!!!

ESTHER: The Musical Schpiel -- by Lori Jacobs

(HAMAN enters. Freezes. HISS-BOO sign. As HAMAN enters, HEGAI is on his way out. As they pass each other, the following exchange occurs:)

HAMAN: Hey, guy!

HEGAI: Hey, man!

(HEGAI exits. HAMAN approaches the King and bows.)

AHASUERUS: Haman, you are a trusted and loyal advisor. Your efforts to thwart the mean chefs' evil plan are commendable. I now appoint you to the highest position in the land - under the King, of course.

HAMAN: The highest position in the land!

AHASUERUS: Under the King.

HAMAN: Under the King. Oh, your Royalness. Thank you so much!

(Aside)

Ah-Ha! I have fooled the King into thinking that I am his trusted and loyal advisor. Now, I have the power I've always wanted!

AHASUERUS: And I decree that all the people in the Kingdom must kneel and bow down to Haman.

HAMAN: Kneel and bow down! Thank you, Ahasuerus! Thank you!

(To himself)

Oh, I love it! What fun!

(HAMAN walks out to the street. He's all pumped up. His ENTOURAGE gathers beside him. The entourage sings the chorus, and Haman raps the song.)

MUSICAL #10 -- POWER

HAMAN'S ENTOURAGE:

YOU DON'T WANNA MESS AROUND WITH HAMAN
CUZ HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER
YOU DON'T WANNA MESS AROUND WITH HAMAN
CUZ HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER

HAMAN: (Rapping)

I WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD WHEN MY FATHER DIED IN BATTLE
A SWORD THROUGH HIS NECK AND IT KNOCKED HIM OFF HIS SADDLE
MY MOTHER WAS A WIDOW, SHE WAS OLDER BUT NOT WISER
SHE ONLY HAD A LITTLE BOY OF SEVEN TO ADVISE HER
PIECE BY PIECE WE LOST EVERYTHING WE OWNED
I WAS SOLD TO A MASON AND I LEARNED TO CARVE IN STONE
I WORKED TWELVE HOURS A DAY CARVING GARGOYLE CHINS
AND I LEARNED THAT THE MAN WITH THE MOST POWER WINS.

HAMAN'S ENTOURAGE:

YOU DON'T WANT TO MESS AROUND WITH HAMAN

‘CUZ HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER
YOU DON’T WANNA MESS AROUND WITH HAMAN
CUZ HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER

HAMAN:

AFTER WORK I RAN THE STREETS WITH ALL THE DIRTY LITTLE URCHINS
STEALING FRUIT ‘N BREAD ‘N NUTS FROM THE TIRED OLD MERCHANTS
AND AS WE RAN AWAY I HEARD A WOMAN SNEER AND MUTTER,
“SEND THOSE RAGAMUFFINS STRAIGHT BACK HOME TO THE GUTTER.”
AND IT MADE ME TIGHT WITH ANGER, BUT IT MADE MY MIND STRONG
AND I PROMISED MYSELF THAT IT WOULDN’T BE TOO LONG
TILL I’D GET IN A POSITION TO WIPE OFF THOSE UGLY GRINS
“CAUSE THE MAN WITH THE MOST POWER WINS.

HAMAN’S ENTOURAGE:

YOU DON’T WANNA MESS AROUND WITH HAMAN
‘CUZ HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER
YOU DON’T WANNA MESS AROUND WITH HAMAN
CUZ HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER

HAMAN:

AT FOURTEEN I JOINED THE ARMY; NO ONE EVEN KNEW MY NAME
I WAS JUST ANOTHER FOOT SOLDIER, A STRANGER TO FAME
THEN I FOUGHT A LOT OF BATTLES – DEAD MEN’S BLOOD POURED OFF MY SWORD
SO THEY CALLED ME A BRAVE WARRIOR AND GAVE ME A REWARD
I WAS CHOSEN BY THE GENERAL TO GUARD THE ROYAL KING
AND I WATCHED AND I WAITED AND I LEARNED EVERYTHING
AND I SAW HOW MEN WERE CHOSEN FOR THE BATTLE FLAGS AND THE PINS
AND I LEARNED THAT THE ONE WITH THE MOST POWER WINS

HAMAN’S ENTOURAGE:

YOU DON’T WANNA TO MESS AROUND WITH HAMAN
“CUZ HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER
YOU DON’T WANNA MESS AROUND WITH HAMAN
CUZ HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER

HAMAN:

NOW THE KING HAS MADE ME THE SECOND POWER IN THE LAND
EVERYONE MUST HONOR ME AND DO WHAT I COMMAND
SO NOW I’VE FINALLY MADE IT, I’M AS HIGH AS I CAN FLY
THE AIR IS SWEET AND FINE UP HERE WITH EAGLES IN THE SKY
I LOOK DOWN AT YOUR POOR STRUGGLES AND I LAUGH RIGHT OUT LOUD
“CAUSE HAMAN, MIGHTY MAN I AM, I’M HIGH ABOVE THE CROWD
THE KING COMPLETELY TRUSTS ME, HE’LL NEVER SEE MY SINS

‘CAUSE THE MAN WITH THE MOST POWER WINS

(HAMAN shouts "Don't mess with me! I've got the power! I'm the top man!" etc., as the ENTOURAGE sings)

HAMAN'S ENTOURAGE:

YOU DON'T WANNA TO MESS AROUND WITH HAMAN

‘CUZ HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER

YOU DON'T WANNA MESS AROUND WITH HAMAN

CUZ HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER

HAMAN AND ENTOURAGE:

POWER! POWER! POWER! POWER!

HAMAN HAS GOT THE POWER!

(Some TOWNSPEOPLE and GUARDS come on stage, including MORDECAI, who stands by the Palace Gates)

HEGAI: Haman delighted in his newly appointed power and enjoyed walking around Shushan each day watching everyone bow down to him.

(HAMAN struts around and people bow down to him. MORDECAI turns away so as not to be noticed.)

However, Haman soon noticed that one man would not bow down to him. That man was Mordecai.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS: Why do you disobey the King's order to bow down to Haman?

MORDECAI: I am a Jew. Jews do not bow down to any man.

ENTOURAGE #1: Oh, he's a Jew.

ENTOURAGE #2: (Sarcastically) Jews don't bow down to any man.

(ENTOURAGE laughs and jeers)

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS: What's your name, Jew?

MORDECAI: I am Mordecai.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS: You will bow down to Haman, Mordecai, the Jew!

MORDECAI: I will not.

(HAMAN approaches MORDECAI and looks him in the eye. MORDECAI looks directly back at HAMAN.)

HAMAN: Do you not know that I am the most powerful man in the Kingdom?

ENTOURAGE #1: Under the King.

(HAMAN gives ENTOURAGE #2 a dirty look. ENTOURAGE #2 tries to make himself as small as possible.)

HAMAN: How dare you disobey the King's order and refuse to bow down to me! Bow down now, you dirty little sand crab! I demand it!

MORDECAI: I'm sorry. But I just can't do that.

MUSICAL # 11 -- WE DON'T BOW DOWN

(As MORDECAI is singing his verse downstage, he is joined by the rest of the CHORUS who are dressed in bright colored choir robes.)

MORDECAI:

HAMAN, YOU ARE A VERY POWERFUL MAN
THE GREATEST MAN ALIVE NEXT TO THE KING
AND I WILL GIVE YOU ALL THE HONOR YOU DESERVE
BUT FIRST I'LL TELL YOU ONE IMPORTANT THING

NO, I DON'T BOW DOWN TO ANY MAN
NO, I DON'T BOW DOWN TO ANY MAN
'CAUSE JEWS BOW DOWN ONLY TO GOD
ONLY TO GOD, DO WE BOW DOWN

SOLOIST #1

THE JEWS RECEIVED THE LAW FROM GOD ABOVE
WE CANNOT WORSHIP ANY IDOL OR MORTAL MAN
THE LAW WAS GIVEN TO US WITH GOD'S GREAT LOVE
AND WE OBEY IT AS CAREFULLY AS WE CAN

EVERYONE: *(Counter-melody)*

NO WE DON'T BOW DOWN TO ANY MAN
(NO, WE DON'T BOW DOWN)
NO, WE DON'T BOW DOWN TO ANY MAN
(NO, WE DON'T BOW DOWN)
'CAUSE JEWS BOW DOWN ONLY TO GOD
(OOOOH)
ONLY TO GOD
DO WE BOW DOWN
(PRAISE ADONAI.)

WOMAN ONE

MY HUSBAND'S A BRILLIANT, A KIND, AND A GENEROUS MENCH
(HOO, HOO, HOO)

WOMAN TWO

WHATEVER HE ASKS I WILL DO ANYTHING JUST TO PLEASE
(HOO, HOO, HOO)

WOMAN THREE

I'LL COOK AND I'LL CLEAN AND HIS EVERY THIRST I WILL QUENCH

HEGAI:

YEAH

ALL THREE WOMEN

BUT ONLY FOR SCRUBBING THE FLOORS AM I DOWN ON MY KNEES

HEGAI:

YEAH

EVERYONE: (*Counter-melody*)

NO WE DON'T BOW DOWN TO ANY MAN

(NO, WE DON'T BOW DOWN)

NO, WE DON'T BOW DOWN TO ANY MAN

(NO, WE DON'T BOW DOWN)

'CAUSE JEWS BOW DOWN ONLY TO GOD

(OOOOOOH)

ONLY TO GOD

DO WE BOW DOWN

(PRAISE ADONAI.)

SOLOIST #3:

A VERY IMPORTANT JOB WAS GIVEN TO JEWS

WE WERE CHOSEN TO SPREAD THE INCREDIBLE NEWS

THERE'S ONLY ONE GOD, AND HE WANTS YOU TO CHOOSE

'CAUSE NO MORTAL MAN CAN STAND IN HIS SHOES

EVERYONE: (*Counter-melody*)

NO WE DON'T BOW DOWN TO ANY MAN

(NO, WE DON'T BOW DOWN)

NO, WE DON'T BOW DOWN TO ANY MAN

(NO, WE DON'T BOW DOWN)

'CAUSE JEWS BOW DOWN ONLY TO GOD

(OOOOOOOH)

ONLY TO GOD

DO WE BOW DOWN

(PRAISE ADONAI.)

BASSES:

NOT A MORTAL MAN

TENORS:

NOT A GOLDEN CALF

ALTOS:

NOT THE KING'S RIGHT HAND

SOPRANOS:

TALL AND PROUD WE STAND

ALL:

'CAUSE JEWS BOW DOWN ONLY TO GOD

HEGAI:

ONLY TO GOD
DO WE BOW DOWN

ALL:

PRAISE ADONAI!

(Jews exit stage, leaving HAMAN and HEGAI)

HEGAI: Haman was furious. He was full of rage.

HAMAN: I am furious! I am full of rage! I HATE that Mordecai! But I will not kill Mordecai right now because I can see that no Jew will bow down to me! I must do away with all the Jewish people.

HEGAI: Haman was determined to kill all the Jews. He went to King Ahasuerus.

(Lights up on AHASUERUS dozing on the throne, the bottle of Jack Daniels in his hand. HAMAN enters. HAMAN freezes. HISS-BOO. AHASUERUS awakens, still sleepy and half drunk; sees HAMAN and, still half asleep, raises the bottle, then realizes he raised the wrong hand, and raises his royal scepter.)

AHASUERUS: *(Slurring his words; half asleep.)* What can I do for you, my trusted servant? Why have you come to see the King?

HAMAN: There is a certain people in your Kingdom, Your Royalness, who do not obey your laws. They will not eat our food. They've made up a bunch of stupid holidays, different from our own holidays. And one day a week they refuse to do any work! These people are called Jews, Your Royalness. If they can get away with this behavior, pretty soon everyone in the Kingdom will become lazy and disobedient. If it please Your Royalness, let a decree be ordered for their destruction. And I will pay ten thousand talents of silver from my vast estate to the royal treasury if you grant my request.

AHASUERUS: *(Yawns)* Eh, whatever. Here, take the royal ring and stamp it on the decree. Just be sure and give it back to me when you're done.

HAMAN: Perfect! I'll draw up a decree to be posted that says all the Jews shall be exterminated. And I'll see that their possessions are placed in the royal treasury.

AHASUERUS: Ah, a little extra cash is always good.

HAMAN: So, any special day that would work for Your Royalness to have this done?

AHASUERUS: *(Has not paid attention to what Haman is saying.)* Special day? For what?

HAMAN: To exterminate the Jews!

AHASUERUS: I don't care. Pick whatever day you like. I don't have time for such minor decisions. I'll put you in charge of this matter.

HAMAN: Thank you, thank you, thank you, Your Royalness.

(Bows to AHASUERUS)

You are a wise and most wonderful King!

AHASUERUS: Yeah, whatever. Now, leave me. It's time for my nap.

(AHASUERUS exits. HAMAN crosses downstage. ZA-ZA approaches HAMAN, holding a basket. On the outside of the basket is a big sign that says "LOTS." (DRUM ROLL). He reaches in and picks out a huge "lot." (HIGH HAT). On one side it says "LOT" and on the other it says "The

13th of Adar." The audience can see it.)

HAMAN: Perfect! The 13th of Adar! Thirteen. -A truly lucky number! And the same month that Moses died.
(Laughs)

This is a perfect day and month for all the Jews to die.

(HAMAN is joined by his ENTOURAGE downstage, which includes ZA-ZA. As HAMAN sings, his ENTOURAGE sings the CHORUS as HAMAN rants. During the song, there are vignettes of destruction going on, where different ethnic and racial groups are attacked. The vignettes could be either enacted or projected on a screen) ¹

MUSICAL # 12 -- THE RALLY

HAMAN:

I'D LIKE TO STATE MY VIEWS
I REALLY HATE THE JEWS
IF I WERE IN THEIR SHOES
I'D TAKE MORE CARE

'CAUSE IF I HAD MY WAY
I'D KILL THEM ALL TODAY
I'D WATCH THEM SWING AND SWAY
IN THE COLD AIR

CHORUS:

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA,

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA

THE KING GAVE YOU THE POWER
TO BUILD A GIANT TOWER
DECREE THE DAY AND HOUR

AND SEND OUT THE WONDERFUL NEWS

ON THE 13TH OF ADAR
THE 13TH OF ADAR

HAMAN: *(shouting)*

THEY INVADE OUR LAND,
THEY TAKE OUR JOBS,
LET'S KILL THEM! THEY
WANT OUR WOMEN.
THEY DON'T OBSERVE OUR
LAWS. LET'S KILL THEM!
THEY DON'T SPEAK OUR
LANGUAGE. THEY'RE
POISONING OUR
CHILDREN'S MINDS. THEY
DON'T LOOK LIKE US.
LET'S KILL THEM

(singing) ON THE 13TH OF ADAR
THE 13TH OF ADAR

¹ The purpose of the vignettes is to show how hatred of people who are perceived as "different" (not just the Jewish people) has led to the horrors of violence, destruction, and annihilation.

THE 13TH OF ADAR
WE'LL KILL ALL THE JEWS

THE 13TH OF ADAR
WE'LL KILL ALL THE JEWS

HAMAN:

BOW DOWN TO ME I SAY
BUT THEY WILL NOT OBEY
SO ARROGANT ARE THEY
THEY REFUSE ME

I'LL BRING THEM TO THEIR KNEES
THEY'LL BEG ME, "HAMAN, PLEASE
DON'T SWING US FROM THE TREES"
THEY AMUSE ME.

CHORUS:

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA
WAYS. THEY DON'T WORK
THEM!
LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA
LIES. THEY SPREAD
THE KING GAVE YOU THE POWER
RUINING OUR LAND. LET'S
TO BUILD A GIANT TOWER
DECREE THE DAY AND HOUR
AND SEND OUT THE WONDERFUL NEWS
ON THE 13TH OF ADAR
THE 13TH OF ADAR
THE 13TH OF ADAR
WE'LL KILL ALL THE JEWS

HAMAN: (*Shouting*)

THEY KEEP THEIR OWN

HARD. LET'S KILL

THEY'RE SPREADING THEIR

DISEASE. THEY'RE

KILL THEM!

THEY DON'T EAT OUR FOOD
THEY'RE DESTROYING OUR
KINGDOM. LET'S KILL THEM
(*singing*) ON THE 13TH OF ADAR
THE 13TH OF ADAR
THE 13TH OF ADAR
WE'LL KILL ALL THE JEWS

HAMAN:

THE WORST OF THE ALL IS MORDECAI
HE THINKS THAT HE'S A SPECIAL GUY
HE LOOKS AT ME RIGHT IN MY EYE
"I ONLY BOW TO ADONAI"

WELL, I'LL SHOW HIM WHAT HAS TO BE
HE'LL LEARN NOT TO CROSS SWORDS WITH ME
IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE HE'LL SEE
THE JEWS ALL HANGING FROM A TREE

ESTHER: The Musical Schpiel -- by Lori Jacobs

CHORUS:

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA

GOD. THEY'RE DIRTY AND

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA

REALLY HUMAN!

THE KING GAVE YOU THE POWER

HAMAN: *(Shouting)*

THEY WORSHIP A STRANGE

IMMORAL. THEY'RE NOT

(singing) THE KING GAVE ME THE POWER

HAMAN AND CHORUS:

TO BUILD A GIANT TOWER

DECREE THE DAY AND HOUR

AND SEND OUT THE WONDERFUL NEWS

ON THE 13TH OF ADAR

THE 13TH OF ADAR

THE 13TH OF ADAR

WE'LL KILL ALL THE JEWS

WE'LL KILL ALL THE JEWS.

(HAMAN laughs and exits with his ENTOURAGE. Lights dim on the upstage ethnic groups. We hear a HEARTBEAT which continues through the next dialog until the next song begins. Lights up downstage. MORDECAI approaches ESTHER.)

MORDECAI: Esther, you must speak to the King! You must tell him that you are Jewish and beg him to cancel the decree!

ESTHER: Oh, Mordecai, the King is so sullen lately. He hasn't called for me for a month now. Anyone who enters the King's Court without being summoned has been put to death!

MORDECAI: Esther! Do not think that you will escape this evil. You and your father's house will perish. All of us will be killed. When you were taken to the palace, you said that this was your special fate. You MUST stand up and talk to the King.

ESTHER: I am so afraid, Mordecai!

MORDECAI: We are all afraid! But only you can do this. Please!

ESTHER: All right. I will try to find the strength. Please ask all the Jews of Shushan to fast and pray for three days. I too will fast and pray.

(ESTHER and MORDECAI hug, and they separate to downstage left and right. As the introduction to SHEMA KOLENU starts, the HEARTBEAT fades out. HEGAI comes on stage, sees the destruction, and begins to sing the song. As HEGAI sings, he is slowly joined by all the people, who are dressed in sack cloth and ashes.)

MUSICAL #13 -- SHEMA KOLENU

HEGAI:

SHEMA, SHEMA, KOLENU
HEAR OUR VOICE
ADONAI, OUR LORD
ELOHENU, OUR GOD
SHEMA, SHEMA KOLENU

(The CHORUS joins softly behind HEGAI, singing the bracketed parts)

OH, LORD
WHAT SIN COULD BE SO GREAT TO KILL US ALL
WHAT REASON CAN DECREE THIS EVIL CALL
WE ASK YOU FOR HOPE [OH, GOD HEAR US]
BE THERE [AHHH], BE THERE [AHHH]
ANSWER OUR PRAYER, [ANSWER]
ANSWER OUR PRAYER, [ANSWER]
ANSWER OUR PRAYER [OUR PRAYER]

(CHORUS joins in with HEGAI, softly, but strongly Hegai.)

SHEMA, SHEMA, KOLENU
HEAR OUR VOICE
ADONAI, OUR LORD
ELOHENU, OUR GOD
SHEMA, SHEMA KOLENU

HEGAI:

OH, GOD
YOU PROMISED ABRAHAM THAT WE WOULD BE
AS NUMEROUS AS THE DROPS IN THE SEA
THE STARS IN THE SKY [OH, GOD HEAR US]
THE SAND, [AHHH] THE SAND [AHHH]
REACH DOWN YOUR HAND, [REACH DOWN]
REACH DOWN YOUR HAND [REACH DOWN]
REACH DOWN YOUR HAND [YOUR HAND.]

ALL: *(In unison)*

FOR THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS,
WE'LL FAST AND WE'LL PRAY
OH, LORD, PLEASE HEAR OUR CRIES
IN SACKCLOTH AND ASHES,
WE'LL PRAY IN THE SHUL
THERE, WHERE YOUR TORAH LIES
TEARS POURING FROM OUR EYES

(The chorus sings softly but strongly in unison, behind Hegai)

ESTHER: The Musical Schpiel -- by Lori Jacobs

SHEMA, SHEMA, KOLENU
HEAR OUR VOICE
ADONAI, OUR LORD
ELOHENU, OUR GOD

HEGAI:

SHEMA,
SHEMA
KOLENU

ALL:

HMMMMMMMM.

(They fall and lean against each other in sorrow as the lights go down.)

END OF ACT I

ACT II

(Lights open on ESTHER sleeping downstage center. She lifts her head up from the pillow and sings from her dream.)

MUSICAL # 14 -- MY SISTER

ESTHER:

HERE IN MY DREAM
THE WORLD IS AT PEACE AT LAST
THE LEOPARD IS SLEEPING WITH THE LITTLE LAMB
THE STORM OF TYRANNY HAS PAST
ALL THE WORLD'S UNTROUBLED
BY EVIL, OR HATRED, OR FEAR
AND OUR GOD, ADONAI, IS EVER NEAR.

(ESTHER puts her head back down on the pillow, in sleep. MORDECAI, HEGAI, and VASHTI enter.)

MORDECAI:

ESTHER.

ESTHER: *(Still in sleep, speaking)* Mordecai?

HEGAI:

ESTHER.

ESTHER: *(Still in sleep, speaking)* Hegai?

VASHTI:

ESTHER.

ESTHER: *(Still in sleep, speaking)* Vashti?

MORDECAI, HEGAI, and VASHTI:

MY SISTER, YOU HAVE TO BE STRONG
DON'T LET LIFE BLOW YOU ALONG
COME OUT TO THE SUN AND THE RAIN
COME OUT TO THE JOYS AND THE PAIN

LIFE IS FOR LIVING, BUT IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY
AND IT'S NOT ALWAYS KIND
DON'T LIVE IT BLIND

(HANDMAIDENS enter and join in with MORDECAI, HEGAI, AND VASHTI)

ESTHER, THE WORLD'S GONE INSANE
DON'T LET YOUR LIFE BE IN VAIN
COME OUT FROM THE CLOUDS TO THE LIGHT

GET ANGRY ENOUGH NOW TO FIGHT

LIFE RUNS IN CYCLES
THE SHADOWS FADE IN THE SUN
YOU'VE GOT THE STRENGTH TO TRY
AND WE'LL BE STANDING BY

(Members of the community enter and join in on the next verse.)

ALL:

ESTHER, THE TIME IS AT HAND
STEP UP, FACE THE TRUTH,
TAKE COMMAND
YOU WON'T WIN THE FIGHT
IF YOU HIDE

YOU'VE GOT ALL YOU NEED
DEEP INSIDE

NOW THE DOORS HAVE OPENED
IT'S TIME TO CROSS THAT LINE
WE'LL TRY TO HELP YOU THROUGH
BUT STILL IT'S UP TO YOU.

ESTHER:

HERE IN MY DREAM, THE
WORLD IS AT PEACE, AT LAST
THE LEOPARD IS SLEEPING
WITH THE LITTLE LAMB. THE
STORM OF TYRANNY HAS
PASSED. ALL THE WORLD'S
UNTRoubLED BY EVIL, OR
HATRED OR FEAR,

AND OUR GOD,
ADONAI,
IS
EVER NEAR.

ALL: *(except ESTHER)*

ESTHER, YOU HAVE TO BE STRONG
ESTHER, YOU HAVE TO BE STRONG

(Everyone but ESTHER, HEGAI, and the HANDMAIDENS exit. Lights up on ESTHER's chambers. ESTHER awakens.)

HANDMAIDEN #1: Oh, Esther! This is terrible news!

ALL HANDMAIDENS: Terrible!

HANDMAIDEN #2: Mordecai expects you to save all the Jewish people! But you are just a young woman.
What can you do?

ESTHER: The fate of my people rests in my hands. If I do nothing, Haman will kill all the Jews!

HANDMAIDEN #3: But, if the King finds out that you are a Jew, he could have you killed, too!

ESTHER: *(To HEGAI)* Oh, Hegai! I am so afraid!

HEGAI: Will you do nothing, my Queen? Will you stand by while your people are slaughtered?

HANDMAIDEN #1: What will you do?

(During the following song, the HANDMAIDENS dress ESTHER in her Royal garb.)

MUSICAL # 15 -- WHAT WILL YOU DO?

ESTHER:

WHEN I WAS A CHILD
I'D LIE ON SATIN PILLOWS
MY MOTHER SMILED DOWN ON ME
IN MY THRONE BY THE WILLOWS
AND MY FATHER WOULD SAY TO ME
LITTLE ONE
THE WORLD IS OUT THERE
WHAT WILL YOU DO?

HANDMAIDENS:

WHAT WILL YOU DO?
WHAT WILL YOU DO, ESTHER?
YOU ARE THE QUEEN NOW
YOU HAVE THE FAVOR OF THE KING
AND YOU CAN DO MOST ANYTHING
YOU SET YOUR MIND TO DO
WHAT WILL YOU DO?

ESTHER:

THEN I WAS ALONE
MY LIFE TURNED A NEW SEASON
MY COUSIN WOULD SAY TO ME
YOU ARE HERE FOR A REASON
AND HE SAID, "YOU MUST ALWAYS BE
STRONG AND TRUE.
THE WORLD IS OUT THERE
WHAT WILL YOU DO?"

HANDMAIDENS:

WHAT WILL YOU DO?
WHAT WILL YOU DO, ESTHER?
YOU ARE THE QUEEN NOW
AND YOU WERE CHOSEN BY THE KING
YOU'RE NOT A YOUNG AND HELPLESS THING
YOUR STRENGTH WILL PULL YOU THROUGH
WHAT WILL YOU DO?

ESTHER:

AND I BELIEVE THE LIGHT WILL ALWAYS SHINE

AND GOD WILL GUIDE MY HAND.
AND WITH HIS STRENGTH THE ANSWER WILL BE MINE
AND I WILL UNDERSTAND
WHAT I HAVE TO DO

HANDMAIDENS:

YOU SEE THE TIME HAS COME

ESTHER:

AND NOW THE TIME HAS COME

HANDMAIDENS:

DECISIONS MUST BE MADE NOW

ESTHER:

IT'S TIME FOR MY DESTINY
I MUST STAND UNAFRAID NOW

HANDMAIDENS:

ESTHER
YOU ARE THE QUEEN NOW
AND YOU MUST TAKE YOUR
RIGHTFUL PLACE
IN LOVE AND LIFE AND TIME
AND SPACE
AND IT'S ALL UP TO YOU

ESTHER

AND NOW THE PLAN IS
CLEAR
THE REASON WHY GOD
PUT ME HERE
AND NOW I'VE MADE MY
CHOICE AND FOUND
MY VOICE AND CAST
AWAY MY FEAR
AND TRUST THAT GOD IS
NEAR

DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

ESTHER:

THIS IS THE TIME
THAT I MUST MAKE A STAND
IT'S ALL UP TO ME
TO SET MY PEOPLE FREE

HANDMAIDENS:

ESTHER

HANDMAIDENS AND ESTHER:

SET [MY/YOUR] PEOPLE FREE!

(HANDMAIDENS exit.)

HEGAI: Esther decided that she would invite the King and Haman to a special feast in her chambers. When the King was relaxed from the food and drink, she would tell him about Haman's plot to kill all the Jews. She worked up her courage to enter the Inner Court.

(ESTHER approaches the King's chambers, and stands at the threshold while HEGAI sings)

MUSICAL #16 -- WHAT WILL YOU DO? (reprise)

HEGAI:

YOU SEE THE TIME HAS COME
DECISIONS MUST BE MADE NOW
IT'S TIME FOR YOUR DESTINY
YOU MUST STAND UNAFRAID NOW
ESTHER, YOU ARE THE QUEEN NOW
AND YOU MUST TAKE YOUR RIGHTFUL PLACE
IN LOVE AND LIFE AND TIME AND SPACE
AND IT'S ALL UP TO YOU
DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO!
THIS IS THE TIME
THAT YOU MUST MAKE A STAND
AND IT'S ALL UP TO YOU
WHAT WILL YOU DO?

(Lights up on the King's Chambers. The KING is sitting on the throne, Jack Daniels in one hand. ESTHER approaches the KING's chambers and stands by the door. The KING notices ESTHER, raises the Jack Daniels bottle, realizes his mistake, and then raises the scepter)

AHASUERUS: Esther, how nice to see you. What troubles you, my dear? What brings you before me? Even if you should ask me for half the kingdom, it shall be granted you.

ESTHER: If it please Your Majesty, let Your Majesty and Haman come this evening to my chambers to a "gourmet" [gor-met] feast that I have prepared for you.

AHASUERUS: How sweet of you! Guard, tell Haman to hurry and do Esther's bidding.

(Lights down on King's chambers. Lights up on HEGAI)

HEGAI: So the King and Haman came to the gourmet [correcting Esther's incorrect pronunciation] feast that Esther had prepared.

MUSICAL # 17 -- DRINK, DRINK, DRINK (CHASE)

*(ESTHER's chambers. Wild scene with all the maids and servants running in and out at an accelerated pace, carrying trays loaded down with food and wine and dancing around to the music of **DRINK, DRINK, DRINK-CHASE**. AHASUERUS, HAMAN, and ESTHER are served. Music ends)*

HAMAN: *(Voice slurred from too much alcohol.)* Well, Queen Esther! This was a wonderful dinner. How nice of you to include me.

AHASUERUS: *(Burps loudly. Voice a bit slurred.)* So, my Queen, you have given us platefuls of wonderful food and goblets full of wine. Now, you must tell me the reason you have brought us to your chambers.
(ESTHER gets up and starts pacing and wringing her hands. She wants to tell him, but she is afraid. Finally, she turns to him.)

ESTHER: My King . . . My King, I . . .
(She can't say it.)

My King, I ask you and Haman to come back tomorrow evening for another feast, and I will tell you at that time.

AHASUERUS: *(Another loud burp)* But my dear . . . Oh, all right. That will be fine. We'll be back tomorrow. Come, Haman. I need my rest. I'm stuffed full of food and wine and I'm sleepy.
(The KING and HAMAN leave the Queen's chambers. ESTHER comes downstage; puts her face in her hands, discouraged. HANDMAIDENS enter and surround ESTHER.)

ESTHER: I couldn't tell him!

HANDMAIDEN #1: Oh, Esther, you can do it! Your name means "Star." Think of that bright star inside you. It will give you the strength that you need.
(VASHTI enters.)

HANDMAIDENS: *(Clearly nervous upon seeing VASHTI.)* Vashti!

ESTHER: Vashti! What brings you to my Queen's chambers?

VASHTI: You mean your "temporary" chambers.
(Pause, as she looks over the scene)

So, I hear that you chickened out! Esther, dahling, my eunuch told me that Hegai told him that your second-cousin-twice-removed Mordecai told you that Haman got the King's permission to kill all the Jews. A loyal eunuch is worth more than anything if you want to know what's going on.
(Flirty)

I always knew that Haman was a very wicked man!
(Observes ESTHER)

So, you're Jewish. Funny, you don't look Jewish.

ESTHER: *(Commenting)* People always say that!

VASHTI: It doesn't take a rocket scientist, my dear, to figure out that if your second-cousin-twice-removed Mordecai is a Jew, you must be one, too. Of course, the King could never make such high level connections.
(Laughs)

I love the man dearly, but he is really a helpless boor about some things. Anyhow, sweetie, you need my help. You and your people are in grave danger of extinction. I can't allow that to happen!

ESTHER: You want to help me?

VASHTI: My favorite hairdresser is Jewish! Do you know how hard it is to find a good hairdresser?
(Pause, and then slowly)

Besides, I hate Haman.

ESTHER: I know! But I feel so helpless. I'm really scared. I've never had to do anything like this before.

VASHTI: When I was a young girl, my father and mother, the King and Queen, were murdered when

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Ahasuerus' father conquered my beloved Babylon. I was taken from my home, brought to this Palace and forced to marry Ahasuerus. He was just the Prince then.

ESTHER: Oh, Vashti! I never knew that! Why, we're practically like sisters!

VASHTI: *(That's a bit much for Vashti to swallow)* Only in your dreams, dahling.

MUSICAL # 18 -- CLIMB UP

VASHTI:

HAVE YOU EVER FELT ALONE?

REALLY ALONE?

NO MOTHER, NO FATHER, NO SISTER, NO BROTHER, NO FRIEND.

NO LOVER WHO CAN KEEP YOU FROM THE COLD

NO LEADER, NO BELIEF THAT YOU CAN HOLD

HAVE YOU EVER REALLY FELT ALONE?

WHEN YOU GET THERE JUST REMEMBER THAT INSIDE YOU THERE'S A STAR
AND YOU ALWAYS KEEP IT WITH YOU, DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU ARE
AND THAT LIGHT WILL KEEP YOU SHINNING EVEN THROUGH THE DARKEST TIME
LOOK INSIDE YOU, YOU'VE GOT EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO MAKE THE CLIMB.

HANDMAIDENS join with VASHTI:

CLIMB UP

CLIMB UP ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET

INCH BY INCH

'TILL YOU FIND YOU'RE STANDING TALL

CLIMB UP

CLIMB UP ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET

VASHTI:

(HANDMAIDENS:)

WHEN YOU LEARN TO STAND ALONE (STAND ALONE)

THEN YOU FIN'LY HAVE THE CHANCE (TAKE THE CHANCE)

THE CHANCE TO HAVE IT ALL

VASHTI:

TO HAVE IT ALL

HAVE YOU EVER FELT AFRAID?

ESTHER:

REALLY AFRAID?

ESTHER AND VASHTI:

NO WEAPONS, NO FENCES, NO WORDS TO DEFEND YOU, NO HOPE

NO WAY TO STOP THE POUNDING OF THE STORM
NO COVER TO KEEP YOUR SPIRIT WARM
HAVE YOU EVER REALLY FELT AFRAID?

VASHTI AND HANDMAIDENS:

WHEN YOU GET THERE JUST REMEMBER THAT INSIDE YOU THERE'S A STAR
AND YOU ALWAYS KEEP IT WITH YOU, DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU ARE
AND THAT LIGHT WILL KEEP YOU SHINNING EVEN THROUGH THE DARKEST TIME
LOOK INSIDE YOU, YOU'VE GOT EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO MAKE THE CLIMB.

VASHTI and HANDMAIDENS:

CLIMB UP
CLIMB UP ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET
INCH BY INCH
'TILL YOU FIND YOU'RE STANDING TALL
CLIMB UP
CLIMB UP ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET
WHEN YOU LEARN TO STAND ALONE
THEN YOU FIN'LY HAVE THE CHANCE
THE CHANCE TO HAVE IT ALL

(ESTHER:)

(I'LL CLIMB UP)
(ON MY OWN TWO FEET)
(INCH BY INCH)
('TILL I'M STANDING TALL)
(I'LL CLIMB UP)
(ON MY OWN TWO FEET)
(YES, I WILL LEARN TO STAND ALONE)
(THEN I WILL FIN'LY HAVE THE CHANCE)

VASHTI AND ESTHER:

TO HAVE IT ALL!

(VASHTI exits. Lights go down on the Queen's chambers. Lights up on HEGAI)

HEGAI: Haman could not stop thinking about Mordecai's refusal to bow down to him. The more he thought about Mordecai, the angrier he became.

(HAMAN and his ENTOURAGE enter. HISS-BOO)

HAMAN: The more I think about Mordecai, the angrier I become. My entourage, what should I do?.

ENTOURAGE #1: You are a favorite of the King. And you were invited to Queen Esther's feast. Whatever you ask for will be granted.

ENTOURAGE #2: Put up a stake in your yard, ten cubits high. In the morning, ask the King to order that Mordecai be impaled on it.

HEGAI: Haman thought that was a great idea?

HAMAN: That's a great idea! I'll have a giant stake put up. Let's do it.

(HAMAN, and ENTOURAGE exit. Lights up on HEGAI)

HEGAI: That night the King could not sleep. His tummy was aching.

(Lights up on King's chambers.)

MUSICAL # 19 -- THE KING CAN'T SLEEP

AHASUERUS:

I CAN'T SLEEP. MY TUMMY'S ACHING
HEAD IS BURNING. HANDS ARE SHAKING
WHY DID I EAT AND DRINK SO MUCH
LIKE A STARVING, THIRSTY BEAST
I SHOULD HAVE PRACTICED MORE RESTRAINT
AT ESTHER'S LOVELY FEAST

I SHOULD LEARN FROM TIMES BEFORE
BUT NO, INSTEAD, I JUST WANT MORE
I DRINK UNTIL MY EYES ARE CROSSED.
AND THEN A WHOLE NIGHT'S SLEEP IS LOST

HEGAI, WHEN I'M NOT SLEEPING
YOU'RE NOT SLEEPING TOO
COME OVER HERE AND SERVE YOUR KING
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO

HAMAN: (*Appearing downstage right*)

I BUILT A STAKE
TEN CUBITS HIGH
IT'S A PERFECT PLACE
FOR MORDECAI
WHEN I WALK IN AND TELL THE KING
HOW HE WOULD NOT BOW DOWN
MORDECAI WILL BE IMPALED
BEFORE THE SUN GOES DOWN

DISRESPECT ME IF YOU DARE
I'LL TAKE YOUR LIFE AND I WON'T CARE
IT'S GREAT TO HAVE THE POWER I DO
I DON'T TAKE GUFF FROM ANY JEW

HAMAN MUST BE RESPECTED
BY THE ONE AND ALL
IF MY RIGHTS ARE NOT PROTECTED
NEXT, YOU'LL SEE THE KINGDOM FALL

AHASUERUS:

PACING THE FLOOR
HOLDING MY BELLY
FOUR IN THE MORNING

BURPING UP DELI
WONDERING WHAT MY ESTHER WILL ASK
FROM THIS TIRED AND SICKLY KING
WITH ALL THE POWER OF MY THRONE
I'LL GIVE HER ANYTHING

BUT FIRST I NEED TO GET SOME REST
A KING MUST ALWAYS BE HIS BEST
ALKA-SELTZER MIGHT HELP TOO
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO!

HEGAI, COME READ TO ME
AND TAKE MY PAIN AWAY
WHEN THE KING CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT
YOU KNOW THAT HE CAN'T RULE ALL DAY

HEGAI:

WORK ALL DAY
THEN WORK ALL NIGHT
SOMETHING HERE
IS JUST NOT RIGHT
WHAT A LIFE I'M FORCED TO LIVE
JUST WORK AND SLAVE AND SERVE
HOW I'D LOVE TO LIVE THE LIFE
I THINK THAT I DESERVE.

OKAY, KING, I'LL READ TO YOU
THE BOOK OF RECORDS², THAT SHOULD DO
I'LL READ ABOUT THE LOCAL NEWS
THAT ALWAYS PUTS YOU IN A SNOOZE

IT SAYS HERE ON AV FIFTEEN
TWO PALACE COOKS SO MEAN
POISONED BOTH YOUR WINE AND BREAD
THEY HOPED TO SEE THE GREAT KING DEAD.

BUT MORDECAI

² An actual old-time record album was used in this scene, so that the audience could see the "records" inside.

FROM SHUSHAN TOWN
REVEALED THE PLOT
IT WAS PUT DOWN
AND THE KING'S DEAR LIFE WAS SPARED
BEFORE YOU TOOK A BITE
THEN BIGTHAN AND TERESH BOTH
WERE KILLED THAT VERY NIGHT

AHASUERUS:

I FORGOT ABOUT THAT PLOT
IT SEEMS THAT I FORGET A LOT
WELL, WHAT WAS DONE FOR MORDECAI?
HOW DID I REWARD THAT GUY?

HEGAI:

IT SAYS HERE THAT NO REWARD
WAS GIVEN TO THE MAN
WHO SAVED THE KING FROM CERTAIN DEATH
AND FOILED THOSE MEAN CHEFS EVIL PLAN

AHASUERUS:

WELL THAT'S NOT RIGHT
I DO AGREE
I MUST DO SOMETHING
SOME DECREE
TO RECOGNIZE HOW MORDECAI
DID SAVE MY LIFE THAT DAY
SOME HONOR TO REWARD THE MAN
LET'S DO IT RIGHT AWAY!

(AHASUERUS goes to his throne. HEGAI stands beside him. HAMAN enters the court. HISS-BOO. The KING sees HAMAN and gestures for him to come forward.)

HAMAN: *(Bows to the King)* My King, I want to ask you . . .

AHASUERUS: *(Interrupting)* Haman, my trusted sidekick, I'm glad to see you. Tell me, what shall be done for a man whom the King wants to honor?

HAMAN: *(Aside)* Oh, goody! That can only mean me!
(To the King)

Your Royalness, the man whom the King wants to honor should be dressed in royal garb, wearing the royal crown and the royal ring. He should be placed on one of the King's own royal horses. One of the King's royal couriers should lead the horse and rider throughout the city, proclaiming "This is the man that the King wants to honor."

AHASUERUS: Ah, great idea, Haman! This is what you must do to Mordecai. Proceed immediately!

HEGAI: Haman was mortified!

HAMAN: I am mordechaid!

(PARADE. Starts with a bugle wake up call! Everyone comes on stage. MORDECAI enters, dressed in the royal robes, the royal ring, and the royal crown, atop a toy hobby horse. All the people gather around. HAMAN leads MORDECAI through the aisles of the theater. All the people follow along singing and carrying flags, banners, toy trumpets, and toy drums.)

MUSICAL # 20 -- HAIL, HAIL MORDECAI

HAMAN:

THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE KING WANTS TO HONOR!
MORDECAI!

EVERYONE:

MORDECAI! MORDECAI! !

HAMAN:

THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE KING WANTS TO HONOR!
MORDECAI

EVERYONE:

MORDECAI! MORDECAI!
SO FLY THE BANNERS
RAISE THEM HIGH
SOUND THE TRUMPETS' CALL
SING ALL PRAISE TO MORDECAI
THE GREATEST MAN OF ALL

HAMAN:

THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE KING WANTS TO HONOR.
MORDECAI.

EVERYONE:

MORDECAI! MORDECAI!

HAMAN:

THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE KING WANTS TO HONOR.
MORDECAI!

EVERYONE:

MORDECAI! MORDECAI!
SO RAISE YOUR VOICES
BEAT THE DRUMS
LET THE WHOLE WORLD HEAR
HOW MORDECAI HAS SAVED THE KING
TODAY ALL PERSIANS CHEER

HAMAN:

THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE KING WANTS TO HONOR.

MORDECAI:

EVERYONE:

MORDECAI! MORDECAI!

HAMAN:

THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE KING WANTS TO HONOR

MORDECAI!

EVERYONE:

MORDECAI! MORDECAI!

SO HAIL, HAIL TO MORDECAI

ALL HAIL WE SAY

HAIL, HAIL TO MORDECAI

THE MAN WHO SAVED THE DAY!

HAMAN:

THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE KING WANTS TO HONOR.

MORDECAI!

EVERYONE:

MORDECAI! MORDECAI!

HAMAN:

THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE KING WANTS TO HONOR

MORDECAI.

EVERYONE:

MORDECAI! MORDECAI!

SO FLY THE BANNERS, RAISE THEM HIGH

SOUND THE TRUMPET'S CALL

SING ALL PRAISE TO MORDECAI

THE GREATEST MAN OF ALL.

HAMAN:

THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE KING WANTS TO HONOR

MORDECAI.

EVERYONE:

MORDECAI! MORDECAI!

HAMAN:

THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE KING WANTS TO HONOR

EVERYONE:

MORDECAI! MORDECAI!

SO FLY THE BANNERS, RAISE THEM HIGH

SOUND THE TRUMPET'S CALL

SING ALL PRAISE TO MORDECAI
THE GREATEST MAN OF ALL!

(After they return to the stage, everyone exits but HAMAN and HEGAI.)

HEGAI: Haman was humiliated!

HAMAN: I am humiliated!

(HAMAN storms off)

HEGAI: That evening I went with the King's guards to Haman's house and brought him to the palace for the second feast given by Esther.

(Scene opens on Queen's chambers. AHASUERUS, HAMAN, and ESTHER have finished eating and drinking)

AHASUERUS: Now, my beautiful Queen, you must tell me. What is your wish and what is your request? Whatever it is, it shall be granted.

ESTHER: *(Stands tall)* My King, I have brought you here to ask for my life as my wish, and the life of my people as my request.

AHASUERUS: What? What are you talking about?

ESTHER: *(Her inner strength revealed)* Your Majesty, I am Jewish.

AHASUERUS: That's funny, you don't look Jewish.

ESTHER: *(Commenting)* People always say that!

(Short pause)

Anyhow, Your Majesty, there is an edict posted all over the Kingdom, that every Jew is to be killed on the 13th of Adar.

AHASUERUS: But who would do such a thing? We Persians have always been tolerant of other peoples and religions!

ESTHER: The evil enemy of the Jewish people – the man with the plan to murder all the Jews -- is this - vile -- Haman!

(HAMAN cringes in terror.)

HEGAI: The King became so angry that he could not speak.

AHASUERUS: I am so angry that I cannot speak. I must go outside to clear my head and do some deep breathing.

(King exits.)

MUSICAL # 21 -- THE PLOT-CHASE

(THE PLOT CHASE [to the music of THE PLOT, played at breakneck speed]. A strobe light could be used, if desired. HAMAN rushes over to plead with ESTHER. She gets up and runs from him in fear. He chases her. They run out. The CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS has a sword fight with HAMAN'S GUARD. The YOUNG PRINCE tries to join in. VASHTI comes out, blows a

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whistle – everyone freezes. She grabs the YOUNG PRINCE by the ear and pulls him off. The sword fight resumes. ZA-ZA comes running in trying to get to HAMAN. She is chased off by the guards. She comes back, and is chased off by one of the women brandishing a buzz saw. Other guards and women run on and off. Finally, ESTHER runs back in, chased by HAMAN. She falls on her chair/pillow, and HAMAN falls on top of her with his head in her lap. MUSIC stops.)

HAMAN: Oh, My Queen. Please forgive me! Have mercy on me! I had no idea that you were Jewish. You don't look Jewish.

ESTHER: *(Commenting)* People always say that!

(Tries to push him away)

Get off of me, you oaf!

(The KING re-enters ESTHER's chambers and sees HAMAN with his head in ESTHER's lap.)

AHASUERUS: What? How dare you touch the Queen! Get your hands off of her! Guards! Come and take away this evil and vile animal!

HEGAI: Your Majesty, at Haman's house we saw a stake ten cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai.

AHASUERUS: Impale Haman on it. Immediately!

HAMAN: *(As he is dragged off by the guards)* No! No! That's not the way I had things planned! I should wear the Royal Crown and the Royal Ring!! Not some worthless Jew! Oh, my King, I beg you! The Royal Ring! The Royal Crown! They should be miiiiiiiiiiiiine (mine)!

AHASUERUS: Another whiner!

(Brief pause)

Now, bring Mordecai to me. I shall appoint him to Haman's position.

(Lights out on the scene.)

HEGAI: So; the guards impaled Haman on the stake, and at Esther's request the King issued a new edict permitting the Jews to arm themselves and fight back. On the 13th of Adar, a great battle took place and the Jews emerged victorious! Mordecai was put in the highest position in the land next to the King. A huge celebration was held!

MUSICAL # 22 -- I SHOULD BE HAPPY

(The tap dancers return and repeat their dance to the RAGTIME music.)

HEGAI: So, they all lived happily ever after – well, at least for a little while!

I SHOULD BE HAPPY

MORDECAI:

I FEEL RELIEF

THE THREAT IS GONE

NO NEED TO WORRY

THE JEWS WILL LIVE ON

BUT STILL THERE'S SADNESS IN ME

ESTHER:

I SHOULD BE HAPPY
NOW ALL IS WELL
THE THREAT IS PAST
GOD GAVE ME STRENGTH
AND I ROSE TO THE TASK
SO WHY THIS MELANCHOLY

MORDECAI:

I SHOULD BE HAPPY

ESTHER AND MORDECAI:

FOR WHERE IS ALL THE JOY IN LIFE
AS I STAND HERE ALONE
KNOWING LOVE I'M YEARNING FOR
CANNOT BE MY OWN
THE DREAMS THAT I USED TO DREAM HAVE FLOWN.

VASHTI:

IT SEEMS IT'S BEEN A LONG, LONG TIME
SINCE THAT MAN SMILED AT ME
AND TRIED TO MAKE ME MAD
I ALWAYS THOUGHT I HAD
MADE HIM HAPPY
I THOUGHT HE WAS HAPPY

AND ON THE RIVER FLOWS
HOW STRANGE THE WAY LIFE GOES
TO FIND MYSELF ALONE
BANISHED FROM THE THRONE
THE ONLY LIFE I'VE KNOW

WHO I AM, I'LL ALWAYS BE
HE CAN'T TAKE THAT FROM ME.
I KNOW I WILL SURVIVE.
AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE,
I'LL BE HAPPY
I'LL TRY TO BE HAPPY

AHASUERUS:

I WEAR THE RING
I WEAR THE CROWN

SO WHY DID I LISTEN
TO SOME STUPID CLOWN
AND SEND THAT GREAT WOMAN AWAY

ESTHER & MORDECAI:

I SHOULD BE HAPPY

AHASUERUS:

ESTHER IS SWEET
A LOVELY CHILD
BUT VASHTI HAS FIRE
TO DRIVE A MAN WILD
I SORELY MISS HER TODAY

ESTHER & MORDECAI:

I SHOULD BE HAPPY

AHASUERUS:

I SHOULD BE HAPPY, AFTER ALL
I AM THE ROYAL KING
AND I CAN DO ANYTHING
WITH THIS CROWN AND RING
THE SONG SO DEEP IN MY HEART
I'LL SING
I'LL SING
I'LL SING

ESTHER WILL HEAR
SHE'S FREE TO GO
LIVE WITH HER PEOPLE
TO FLOURISH AND GROW
AND I'LL CALL MY VASHTI TO ME

ESTHER & MORDECAI:

I SHOULD BE HAPPY

AHASUERUS:

THAT WOMAN KNOWS
SHE WILL FORGIVE
KINGS CAN BE FOOLISH
SO LONG MAY THEY LIVE
TO RULE THE LAND AND THE SEA

ESTHER & MORDECAI:

I SHOULD BE HAPPY

AHASUERUS:

ALL IS WELL, THE STORY ENDS
THE WAY I KNEW IT SHOULD
WHEN YOU'RE KING YOU MUST DECIDE
FOR THE GREATER GOOD, AND
NO ONE IS GREATER THAN I
I SHOULD BE HAPPY.
YOU SEE,
IT'S ALL ABOUT ME!

(AHASUERUS walks over to ESTHER and takes her hand)

AHASUERUS: Esther, your people will be safe now. They are celebrating your victory in Shushan. Go, be with them. I free you from your wedding vows.

(Jewish accent)

You should live and be well. Oy! Where did that come from?

(ESTHER hugs AHASUERUS and steps away to Mordecai. AHASUERUS goes over to VASHTI, who does not see him. Calling out gently)

Vashti . . .

(VASHTI turns and sees AHASUERUS. Her face shows that she's pleased, but she covers it up immediately.)

VASHTI: What nerve to interrupt me!

AHASUERUS: *(To the audience)* Ahhh, now everything is back to normal.

(Everyone comes onstage)

MUSICAL #23 -- HE TRIED TO KILL US

ALL:

'TILL THE END OF TIME WE ALL MUST SPREAD THE NEWS
HOW QUEEN ESTHER'S BRAVERY SAVED ALL THE JEWS
SO NOW CELEBRATE AND RAISE YOUR GLASSES HIGH
"TILL YOU CAN'T TELL HAMAN FROM DEAR MORDECAI

OH, WE'RE CHEERING, LAUGHING, SINGING IN THE STREET
WE'RE CELEBRATING WITH OUR DANCING FEET
AND AT SUNDOWN PRAYERS WILL RISE FROM EVERY SEAT
THE THREAT OF DEATH IS GONE
OUR PEOPLE WILL LIVE ON
HE TRIED TO KILL US, WE SURVIVED
HE TRIED TO KILL US, WE SURVIVED

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HE TRIED TO KILL US, WE SURVIVED
LET'S EAT!

HEGAI:

IN EVERY LIFE THERE COMES A TIME TO CHOOSE
TO STAND FOR WHAT IS RIGHT
TO FIND THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE DEEP INSIDE
TO FIGHT WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT

ALL:

AND IT'S ALL UP TO YOU!
WHAT WILL YOU DO?

END OF PLAY

REVIEWS

Grand Rapids Press: June 16, 2006 - "Esther premiere shows real promise

"Esther, the Musical" is a party with a purpose. Both goals were served well by the world premiere Thursday before a sold-out house ...” ["Click Here" to read the full article.](#)

Grand Rapids Press: June 11, 2006 - "Humorous musical takes a serious turn or two

Esther is the original Jewish drama queen. For hundreds of years, Jewish congregations have celebrated the annual festival of Purim by creating "spiels" or skits about Esther, who helped save the Jewish people from annihilation in about 479 B.C.” ["Click Here" to read the full article.](#)