

PURIM 2017 - A NON-POLITICAL PURIM SHPIEL

by Shira Danan

**Introduction**

NARRATOR enters.

NARRATOR

Welcome one and all to our completely *non-political* Purim shpiel. Tonight, we will tell the story of the Book of Esther with *absolutely no jokes* about the current presidential administration. You're welcome.

KING AHASHVEROSH enters.

KING AHASHVEROSH

I'm sorry, did you say "non-political"?

NARRATOR

Your majesty! I didn't see you there! Yes, we've been told people are absolutely sick of politics, so we're avoiding the whole thing.

KING AHASHVEROSH

But don't you think there are some pretty unavoidable similarities between what's happening right now in the United States and the Purim story?

NARRATOR

Go on...

KING AHASHVEROSH

A foolish, sexist but incredibly handsome leader--me!--manipulated by an evil adviser who hates Jews? The king's beautiful Jewish daughter--sorry, wife--who everyone is hoping will stand up for the little guy?

NARRATOR

Fine, I know! It's perfect! And it's impossible not to make jokes about Trump. I mean come on, he looks like he just ate a bag of Cheetos and used his face as a napkin.

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Did you hear the one about how even  
his hair is trying to get away from  
him?

NARRATOR  
Haha that's a good one, sire!

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Thanks! I've been working on my  
stand-up routine.

NARRATOR  
Really? Hey, why don't you take the  
mic?

KING AHASHVEROSH  
You sure?

NARRATOR  
Of course! You're the king! You tell  
us about Chapter 1. Just remember:  
no political jokes.

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Can I make jokes about hipsters?

NARRATOR  
No.

NARRATOR exits.

## **Chapter 1**

KING AHASHVEROSH takes the mic.

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Hey there! You guys like comedy?  
We've got a beautiful crowd here.  
Anyone from Shushan?

KING AHASHVEROSH (CONT.)  
Shushan's great because it's a real  
party city, and what can I say? I'm  
a party guy. I rule over 100 and 7  
and 20 countries, which is alot of  
people counting on me to throw a  
rager.

KING AHASHVEROSH (CONT.)  
So last week all my buddies are  
over, and we're having a good time--  
drinking and eating and talking  
about cool bro stuff. We'd been

partying for like, I don't know, 100  
and fourscore days or something.

KING AHASHVEROSH (CONT.)  
And I suddenly thought: oh man. I  
gotta get Vashti down here. These  
guys would love her. So I hit Vashti  
up, and I'm like "Hey babe, you  
gotta get over here. This party is  
lit." And she texts back, "Why?" So  
I'm like "Cause you're hot and I'm  
the king so my requests are not  
optional." So get this: she writes  
back "Nah, I'm tired."

KING AHASHVEROSH (CONT.)  
What is the *deal* with wives? Am I  
right? It's like hey babe, I threw a  
giant party. Those drinks and snacks  
didn't just make themselves. I had  
to order someone to do that. The  
least you can do is come downstairs  
and dance for everyone. You know  
what I mean?

KING AHASHVEROSH (CONT.)  
So, I banish her, because you've got  
to make an example, right?  
Otherwise, all the wives of Persia  
are going to be bailing on their  
husband's parties, and then parties  
would be terrible. You're welcome  
for saving parties.

KING AHASHVEROSH (CONT.)  
Anyway, that's all I got for you  
tonight! You guys have been great!  
Pay your taxes!

## Chapter 2

ESTHER is center.

ESTHER  
Uncle Mordechai, can you come in  
here for a second?

MORDECHAI enters.

MORDECHAI  
What is it, Hadassah?

ESTHER  
Please don't call me Hadassah

anymore. I've decided to go by  
Esther.

MORDECHAI

Why?

ESTHER

Because Esther sounds cool, and  
Hadassah sounds like a name for a  
hospital.

MORDECHAI

Fine, but Esther sounds like a name  
for a book.

ESTHER

Rude.

MORDECHAI takes out an invitation.

MORDECHAI

While we're talking, I got this  
invitation in the mail today. All  
the eligible virgins of the kingdom  
are to report to the king. He needs  
a new wife.

ESTHER

That sounds kind of sexist, don't  
you think?

MORDECHAI

I brought you up right! I'm so  
ferklemt. But you still have to go  
cause we live in a dictatorship.  
Just do me a favor. When you do meet  
the king, don't mention you're  
Jewish.

NARRATOR

Mordechai and Esther began their  
walk to the palace.

AHASHVEROSH enters, leans against wall. ESTHER and MORDECHAI  
walk by him. AHASHVEROSH whistles.

KING AHASHVEROSH

Hey baby, you can be my queen any  
time.

ESTHER

Excuse me! Are you talking to me?  
How would you like it if someone  
yelled at your mother that way!

Treat women with respect! Who do you think you are?

MORDECHAI

Uh oh.

KING AHASHVEROSH

I'm the king.

ESTHER

Oh Farsi! I'm so sorry. In that case, I'd love to be your queen.

KING AHASHVEROSH

Alright! Let's go get hitched!

They exit.

MORDECHAI

(singing)

Is this the little girl I carried?

MORDECHAI sighs.

MORDECHAI (CONT.)

On the plus side, I can finally turn Esther's room into a micro brewery.

BIGTHAN and TERESH enter.

MORDECHAI

Oh hey it's Bigthan and Teresh! Two of my favorite king's guards. What are you guys up to?

BIGTHAN AND TERESH

Nothing!

MORDECHAI

Okaaaay. Do you guys want to get a milkshake or something?

BIGTHAN

Sorry, we're busy!

TERESH

Plotting the king's murder!

BIGTHAN

Teresh!

TERESH

Whoops.

BIGTHAN and TERESH exit.

MORDECHAI

I must tell the king at once!

NARRATOR

So Mordechai rushed to warn the king about Bigthan and Teresh's evil plan. His good deed was recorded in the king's official log. That's an important bit of foreshadowing, so don't forget, okay?!

### Chapter 3

KING and HAMAN enter, shake hands.

NARRATOR

One day, the king hired a new, evil advisor named Haman. Haman was conniving, self-absorbed, and murderous.

KING AHASHVEROSH

But what I love most about him is his funny hat!

HAMAN

From now on, everyone must bow down to me, for I am the king's most important advisor!

KING AHASHVEROSH

I'll bow down to that sweet hat any day!

KING starts to bow, HAMAN stops him.

HAMAN

No no, not you King Ahashverosh.

KING exits. MORDECHAI enters, tries to sneak by without bowing.

HAMAN (CONT.)

Hey you! Bow down to me at once!

MORDECHAI

Um...no thank you?

HAMAN

Bow down at once!

MORDECHAI

How about a handshake? Tip of the hat? Wink?

HAMAN

How dare you defy me! Don't you respect my funny hat?

MORDECHAI

I do, of course, Haman. It looks delicious. It's just that I am a Jew, and Jews only bow down before the Lord.

HAMAN

A Jew, eh?

MORDECHAI shrugs, exits.

HAMAN

Well, there's only one thing to do.

NARRATOR

Send him an angry letter?

HAMAN

No.

NARRATOR

Swap his shampoo for hair removal cream?

HAMAN

No.

NARRATOR

Mail him an envelope full of glitter?

HAMAN

No! I'm going to kill all the Jews.

NARRATOR

Well, I think that's *overkill*, don't you? Eh? Eh?

HAMAN

I do not understand your joke. Let's see, I have to pick a day. I know! I'll draw lots, which are also known as "purim."

HAMAN mimes drawing lots.

NARRATOR

So Haman drew lots and settled on the 13th of Adar, which was very inconvenient because he had tennis tickets for that night. But those were the kinds of sacrifices Haman was willing to make for villainy.

HAMAN approaches KING AHASHVEROSH

HAMAN

Sire, I wanted to ask your approval of a dastardly plan I'm working on.

KING AHASHVEROSH

(looking at Haman's hat)

Look at it! It has three corners. So silly!

HAMAN

Yes. So silly. Anyway, the plan is to kill all the Jews. Is that cool?

KING AHASHVEROSH

What? Kill all the Jews? Sure. Do you think you could get me a hat like that?

HAMAN

How about I trade you my hat for your royal seal?

KING AHASHVEROSH

Done!

They trade.

#### **Chapter 4**

ESTHER sits eating chocolates and brushing hair.

ESTHER

You know what? Being queen isn't such a bad gig after all.

HATACH enters.

HATACH

Your majesty. Your uncle Mordechai has been spotted in front of the palace grounds wearing sackcloth and ashes and moaning.

ESTHER  
He's doing what??

ESTHER runs over to the window. MORDECHAI enters, stands on other side of stage, rents garments, etc.

ESTHER (CONT.)  
Why is he doing that? Can you go ask him, Hatach?

HATACH  
Certainly.

HATACH opens window.

HATACH (CONT.)  
(yelling)  
Mordechai, what are you doing?

MORDECHAI  
I'm mourning the king's decree that all Jews will be killed on the 13th of Adar!

HATACH  
Okay, thanks! (to Esther) He's mourning the king's decree that all Jews will be killed on the 13th of Adar.

ESTHER  
What?! That's horrible!

HATACH  
(to Mordechai)  
That's horrible!

MORDECHAI  
I know! Please tell the queen we need her to go before the king and beg him to change his mind.

HATACH  
(to Esther)  
He wants you to go before the king and beg him to change his mind.

ESTHER  
But what if he kills me?!

HATACH  
(to Mordechai)  
But what if he kills her?!

ESTHER

Everyone knows if you approach the king without an invitation and he doesn't hold out his golden scepter, you'll be killed!

HATACH

(to Mordechai)

Everyone knows if you approach the—

MORDECHAI

Thanks Hatach, I can hear her!

HATACH

Oh fine. I see how it is. I'll just sit over here and be quiet. No one ever remembers old Hatach, the king's chamberlain who passed messages between Esther and Mordechai during Chapter 4. You never see little children dressing as Hatach for Purim and singing songs like "Oh Hatach was a helpful helpful man," do you? *Do you?*

ESTHER

Are you done?

HATACH

Yes.

ESTHER

Mordechai, I can't do it! I could die!

MORDECHAI

Esther, history has its eyes on you! Don't throw away your shot!

NARRATOR

Sorry to butt in, but this seems like a good time to remind you that in addition to no jokes about politics or hipsters, there are no jokes about the musical "Hamilton" allowed.

MORDECHAI

Never heard of it.

ESTHER

Okay, Mordechai. Tell all the Jewish people to fast for three days--we'll call it the Whole Three diet. Then I

shall go before the king, and if I  
perish, I perish.

MORDECHAI

Great! There's a million things you  
haven't done, but just you wait,  
just you wait!

NARRATOR

Seriously?

## Chapter 5

NARRATOR

After the Jews fasted for three  
days, Esther paid the king a visit.  
She was very nervous.

ESTHER approaches KING AHASHVEROSH.

ESTHER

Knock-knock! How's it going? Can I  
come in? Totally fine if you're  
busy.

KING AHASHVEROSH

Oh, hello.

ESTHER

Hey, it's my best girl! Here, you  
wanna touch the tip of my golden  
scepter?

He holds his scepter toward her.

ESTHER

Ew! (to NARRATOR) No "Hamilton"  
jokes, but *that's* allowed?

NARRATOR

(shrugging)  
It's in the book.

ESTHER sighs.

ESTHER

(to KING)  
Sure, thanks sweetie.

KING AHASHVEROSH

What's the haps? Do you need something? Whatever it is, it shall be yours. Up to half my kingdom. Just don't say you want Babylon. I love Babylon.

ESTHER

No, it's not Babylon. I had something else in mind. A banquet. With you and...Haman.

KING AHASHVEROSH

Haman...Haman...Haman...remind me?

ESTHER

Brown hair? About this tall? Used to wear that three-cornered hat you're wearing right now?

KING AHASHVEROSH

Oh, hat guy! Sure, we can come to your banquet.

The KING, HAMAN and ESTHER sit at a table.

NARRATOR

And so, Esther held her banquet, and the king and Haman attended. At the banquet, the king asked Esther once again what she desired.

KING

Seriously, anything you want up to half my kingdom. Don't say Egypt!

ESTHER

No, not Egypt.

KING

Are you sure? It's really nice.

ESTHER

I'm sure. What I want is...

KING

Yes?

ESTHER

I want...

HAMAN

Spit it out.

ESTHER

I want you both...to come back for another banquet.

KING AHASHVEROSH does a slow clap.

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Wow, can you imagine that? All this is just the invitation for the main banquet. You really know how to party, Esther!

KING and ESTHER exits. HAMAN starts walking.

NARRATOR  
Haman left the banquet and started walking home, feeling pretty good about how much the new queen seemed to like him. But then he ran into Mordechai, who once again refused to bow down.

HAMAN encounters MORDECHAI, who shakes his head no a single time. MORDECHAI exits. HAMAN screams in frustration. ZERESH enters.

HAMAN  
I had the worst day.

ZERESH  
Aww, Haman, you poor sweetie. Was it that bad Mordechai again? You know, sometimes when I'm feeling down, I have a bunch of my girlfriends over and we drink wine and build gallows for whoever we're mad at. What do you think? Do you want to build some gallows?

HAMAN  
Yeah, okay.

## Chapter 6

KING AHASHVEROSH tosses and turns in bed.

NARRATOR  
The king couldn't sleep.

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Can't I just pay someone to sleep for me? Hatach, get in here!

HATACH runs in.

HATACH  
Me?! You want me?

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Sure, why not? Read to me so that I  
can sleep.

HATACH  
Of course, your majesty. I'll read  
the court's log. It's very boring  
and you'll be asleep in no time.

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Sounds perfect.

HATACH opens the book.

HATACH  
Ooh, here's a good one. Apparently,  
Bigthan and Teresh plotted to murder  
you and Mordechai found out and  
saved your life.

KING AHASHVEROSH  
That's supposed to calm me down?! A  
murder plot?! This is why no one  
likes you, Hatach!

HATACH  
Sorryyyyyy!

HATACH runs out.

KING AHASHVEROSH  
So Mordechai saved my life, eh? I  
need to reward him.

NARRATOR  
The king called his most trusted  
advisor, Haman, to his chambers.

HAMAN enters.

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Haman! I need your advice.

HAMAN  
Kill the Jews!

KING AHASHVEROSH  
That's your answer to everything.  
No, listen. I need to reward a very

special man for his service to the king. What would you do for such a man?

HAMAN

Oh. I see. Well, that's very nice of you.

KING AHASHVEROSH

I know.

HAMAN

If it were me, I guess I'd want to wear royal robes and a royal crown and ride a royal horse through the streets while someone announced "Make way for this guy! The king thinks he's awesome."

KING AHASHVEROSH

Sounds perfect. Go do that for Mordechai.

HAMAN

Mordechai?! Noooooooooooooo.

KING AHASHVEROSH

No?

HAMAN

I mean: yesssssssssss.

KING exits. MORDECHAI enters, and HAMAN puts a crown on him and leads him around the stage.

NARRATOR

So Haman was forced to guide Mordechai through the streets while yelling:

HAMAN

(sadly)

Make way for this guy! The king thinks he's awesome!

NARRATOR

And Mordechai tried to look humble, but let's be honest, he probably loved it.

MORDECHAI

It's no sackcloth and ashes, but royal robes are alright.

## Chapter 7

HAMAN, KING, and ESTHER sit at banquet table.

ESTHER

Thank you again for coming to my banquet.

KING AHASHVEROSH

Thank you for having us! I know how busy you are with...archery? Reading? Anointing yourself? What's your thing again?

ESTHER

Um, thanks. As you know, I have a big request to make tonight.

KING AHASHVEROSH

Whatever it is, it will be yours, up to half my kingdom, not including Babylon or Egypt.

ESTHER

I ask for nothing less than my life! And the lives of my people!

KING AHASHVEROSH

What?! What monster threatens your life?

HAMAN

Uh oh.

ESTHER

It is him! Haman! Your wicked advisor!

KING AHASHVEROSH

Haman??

ESTHER

You see, I am a Jew.

KING AHASHVEROSH

You're Jewish?! No wonder you're always trying to feed me.

ESTHER

Haman convinced you that just because the Jews have different customs that we don't deserve to

live peacefully in Persia! He's  
using xenophobia to rally the base!  
He should be Bannon-ished.

Everyone looks at NARRATOR.

NARRATOR  
Oh fine, I'll allow it. But just  
because this is such a big moment!

ESTHER  
Thanks, man.

HAMAN  
My king, I didn't know, I never--

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Haman, I'm a fun-loving king. I  
don't get angry often. But when I  
do, I'm a fan of dark, dark irony.

KING AHASHVEROSH snaps fingers. GUARDS enter.

KING AHASHVEROSH (CONT.)  
Take him away!

GUARDS grab HAMAN.

KING AHASHVEROSH (CONT.)  
Hang him on the very gallows he  
built for Mordechai.

ESTHER  
Ooh that IS dark.

HAMAN  
But--but how did you even know about  
those gallows?

KING AHASHVEROSH  
Hatach told me.

HATACH runs on.

HATACH  
Yes! Hatach for the win!

## Chapter 8, 9, and 10

NARRATOR  
The King took away his ring from  
Haman and gave it to Mordechai, who

became his trusted advisor.

KING gives ring to MORDECHAI.

MORDECHAI

Thanks, King A!

KING AHASHVEROSH

I never should have trusted that evil Haman. Only you, Mordechai, have the conviction and bravery to speak truth to power.

ESTHER

AHEM.

MORDECHAI

While we're talking, the Queen and I had a special request. Can you please revoke your decree to kill all the Jews?

KING AHASHVEROSH

Wow, I really wish I could. But you can't undecree a decree.

ESTHER

You can't?

KING AHASHVEROSH

Nope.

MORDECHAI

But this is important!

KING AHASHVEROSH

So is royal tradition! Haven't you seen "The Crown"?

ESTHER

What are we going to do?

KING AHASHVEROSH

I'll tell you what, sweetheart. I'll send out a new decree that the Jews are allowed to fight back and kill as many people as they want and keep the spoils.

MORDECHAI AND ESTHER

Perfect!

NARRATOR reads from Book of Esther.

NARRATOR

And so, the new decree was sent to all the corners of the kingdom. And on the 13th and 14th of Adar, the Jews fought back and smote their enemies (reading) oh my...500 dead...300 perished...75,000?! Yikes! Um...let's just skip over that part. You can read it later on your own, once you're drunk. Anyway, after all the bloodshed, the Jews rejoiced and celebrated their victory.

MORDECHAI AND ESTHER

Hooray!

NARRATOR

Mordechai sent a message to all the Jews of the land.

Mordechai reads notice.

MORDECHAI

From now on, the 14th of Adar will be a special holiday for the Jews to remember this victory! We'll eat cookies shaped like three-cornered hats,

ESTHER

And dress up in funny clothes,

AHASHVEROSH

And par-tay!

NARRATOR

We did it, guys! A non-political Purim shpiel. I'm sure you didn't *once* think about our current political situation.

Everyone cheers.

EVERYONE

The end!