

Summary of the Purim Story in 550 words

Ahasuerus was a rich, powerful King. He throws a huge party. After lots of drinking he calls for Vashti his Queen to appear in her royal crown. She refuses and, as instructed by his advisers, he exiles her for fear she will set a bad example to other women.

He holds a beauty pageant to find a new wife, and Ester (who was an orphan looked after by her uncle Mordechai) was presented and won. She doesn't admit to the king she is Jewish.

Mordechai goes to the palace every day to see how she is. Whilst there he overhears Bigthan and Teresh plotting to overthrow the King. He tells Ester who reports back to the King. These two were hanged.

The King promotes Haman and everyone has to bow to him, Mordechai refuses, enraging Haman. Haman plots to kill all the Jews and gets the King to agree to it because they have different laws. Lots are drawn and a date is set to kill all the Jews.

Mordechai and the Jews mourn at the news. Ester sends a message to Mordechai to find out why he was mourning. Mordechai tells her and says that maybe that is why she is Queen; to save her people. Ester calls for all the Jews to fast for 3 days and does so herself. After this she invites the King and Haman to a banquet. At this banquet she invites them to another one the next day.

Haman spots Mordechai who still won't bow to him which makes him angrier. His wife suggests he builds gallows to hang Mordechai from.

King Ahasuerus can't sleep so he reads his chronicles. Here he finds out that Mordechai saved him with no reward. So when Haman approaches the King to discuss hanging Mordechai the King asks how Haman would honour 'the man who truly pleases the King?' Haman assumes this is about him so instructs the King to dress this man as a King and get an official to parade him down the street on horse-back saying that the King wants to honour him.

So Haman is sent to do this for Mordechai. Haman's wife and advisers predict that Haman will fall before Mordechai.

Haman goes to Ester's banquet and Ahasuerus asks what she wants. She asks for her and her people's lives. Ahasuerus asks who has threatened her and she points to Haman. Haman begs her for forgiveness but the King thinks he is trying to violate her and puts him to death on the gallows he built for Mordechai.

Ahasuerus gives his signet ring to Mordechai who writes into law, to be sent across the Empire, that the Jews now have permission to kill anyone who threatens them with violence on the day they were supposed to be killed. The Jews rejoice and feast.

Jews were now feared. In Shushan 500 non-Jews were killed and Haman's 10 sons, although their possessions were not touched. Ester asks for a second day for the Jews to kill their enemies, which is granted, resulting in another 300 deaths. Across the empire 75,000 were killed and there were celebrations and feasts.

Mordechai instructs the Jews that they must celebrate, feast and give gifts to each other and the poor. This should be remembered for generations.