

“Malice In the Palace”

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Narrator: (reading from book) Good evening, and welcome to our show, “Malice in the Palace: The Story of Esther.” We didn’t have a big budget for the show, but we still have everything we need to tell a really great story: A king...(KING strikes a new pose), a queen...(QUEEN strikes a new pose), a prime minister...(HAMAN strikes a new pose), a faithful servant...(MORDECAI strikes a new pose), and many others. I play the part of the Narrator. And even though I don’t get to do a lot of fun character lines, my part is still very important. At least that’s what the director says.

Haman: I can’t believe you fell for that.

Narrator: Stop it. We take you now to Persia in the year 483 BC, when the mighty King Ahasuerus ruled from India to Ethiopia.

“Crisis in the Palace”

Narrator: And in that year, the kingdom was abuzz with whispers and rumors of a terrible scandal,

Speaker 2: (gasp) Really?

Speaker 1: Yes!

Speakers 3 and 4: (gasp) You’re joking!

Speakers 1 and 2: No!

Speakers 5-8: (gasp) You think?

Speakers 1-4: Maybe.

King: Go and fetch the queen, the party’s getting slow.

Vashti: No!

All: (gasp)

Advisors: You must forbid the queen to ever come to you.

King: Thus it shall be done, because she won’t obey.

Vashti: Ha!

Narrator: And so the news swept across all of Persia: Queen Vashti said “no” to the King, and he banished her from ever coming into his presence again. But now the King had another problem.

Haman: Your Highness, on behalf of all your advisors, let me just say that was splendid work!

King: It is written: “Sometimes the lion must show his teeth, to prove he is not the rabbit.”

All: Yes, the lion!

Haman: Wisely said, Your Highness!

Advisor 1: If you hadn’t acted quickly, every woman in the kingdom might have gotten ideas.

Advisor 2: And before you know it...POW!

King: Pow?

Advisor 3: The Persian Organization of Women.

Young Woman: Equal shekels for equal work! ...It could happen...

King: Enough empty talk! I wish to go over there.

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Haman: Yes, of course, Your Highness. Guards!

Guards: Boom chucka-lucka-lucka, Boom chucka-lucka-lucka, Boom chucka-lucka-lucka, Boom!

“Chant 1”

Guard Captain: Halt!

King: And now, place the queen at my right hand.

Haman: Uh...Your Highness, you banished the queen.

King: What?

Advisor 4: She can't come here...You sent her away.

King: Whose idea was that? Now what do I do? Keeper of the Harem!

Harem Keeper: Right here, Your Highness. Your command is my command.

King: Somehow I seem to be queenless.

Harem Keeper: You, Sire? But you look fabulous! Have you been working out?

King: No, No! I sent her away myself.

Harem Keeper: Oh. In that case, Your Highness, perhaps...you should pick a new queen.

King: Excellent idea! Go at once! Find the women to choose from.

Harem Keeper: All right people, let's get busy!

Searcher 1: We've got this side!

Searcher 2: We've got this side!

Searcher 3: We'll look in the middle.

Searcher 4: Yuck! The people over here look really bad.

Searcher 5: How about this lady with the funny looking outfit!

All: Nawww.

Searcher 6: Hey look! Over here!

Searcher 7: She's even wearing a costume from the show!

All: Oooo...

Harem Keeper: What's your name, sweetie?

Esther: Esther.

Harem Keeper: Perfect! Talk about being in the right place at the right time.

Narrator: And so Esther, a young orphan and a Daughter of Israel, was brought to the royal court of the King. Before she entered the walls of the palace, she said goodbye to her guardian Mordecai, the cousin who had taken her in and raised her when her parents died.

Harem Keeper: Right this way, dearie. Welcome to your new home.

Mordecai: Wait, wait! Let me speak to her.

Harem Keeper: I'm sorry, Sweetlips, you can't come in here.

Esther: Please...it's my guardian. Let me talk to him one more time before I go.

Harem Keeper: Very well, but make it snappy. The hall's only rented till ten. Privacy! A little privacy for the girl!

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Esther: I’m sorry, Mordecai. I have to go.

Mordecai: I know, my child. You can’t say no to a king.

Esther: I’ll try to remember what you taught me.

Mordecai: I’m sure you will, Esther.

Esther: And I’ll try to tell everyone what it means to be one of the people of Israel.

Mordecai: No! No, you musn’t!

Esther: What do you mean?

Mordecai: That’s why I had to talk to you. We have enemies in the palace who hate all the people of God.

Esther: Oh, no...what should I do?

Mordecai: Be true to your God and true to your people. Just don’t tell anyone where you come from.

Esther: I’ll do my best.

Mordecai: And Esther...

Esther: Yes?

Mordecai: I’m proud of you. You’re the daughter I never had.

Harem Keeper: O.K., the sob scene’s over! Let’s keep this thing moving. Harem people, front and center! Folks, I’d like you to meet our newest recruit, Esther baby, strut your stuff!

All Candidates: Ewwww....

Candidate 1: Holy Zoroaster, look what the camel dragged in!

Candidate 2: That outfit is a scream!

Candidate 3: Where do you shop, Kid...the Wailing Wall-Mart?

Candidate 4: I think she needs new perfume, too.

Candidate 5: Yeah, something other than Dead Sea #5!

Harem Keeper: All right, claws in, you Persian cats! We all know the kid needs a little help.

Candidate 3: A little! Please.

Candidate 5: She’s a Medusa Wannabe.

Harem Keeper: Esther honey, before you meet the King, you’ve been chosen for a very special honor. Your fabulous Trip-to-the-Palace Package comes with a full year of beauty treatments! Six months with oil of myrrh...

All: Oooo...

Harem Keeper: ...and six with perfumes and cosmetics!

All: Ahhhh.

Esther: Thanks. I’m flattered, I think.

Harem Keeper: Ladies, show her what she needs to know!

“Beauty Secrets”

Candidate 1: Well, Kid, that’s fine if you want to keep your beauty a secret...

Candidate 2: But we’re here to tell you...

Harem Keeper: O.K. people, it’s time to play...

All: Name...That...Queen!

Harem Keeper: Well, here they are, Your Highness...the final four contestants. So what’ll it be? Bachelorette number one...number two...number three...or...number four?

King: Ahhh...I choose this one.

Three Beauty Candidates: Awwww.

Harem Keeper: Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you the new First Lady of the Kingdom, a Queen-for-More-Than-a-Day...Queen Esther!

All: Cheer

King: Very well, my work here appears to be done.

Haman: Just a moment, Your Majesty. As long as you’re in the mood for choosing things, why don’t you select a new prime minister while you’re at it?

King: Very well, Keeper of the Records! Who’s on the list of candidates for Prime Minister?

Record Keeper: Your Highness, you have a loyal servant named Mordecai, one of the People of Israel. He’s honest, hardworking, faithful, brave, obedient, and very wise. He also saved your life last year by stopping an assassination plot.

King: Yes, but what do the polls say?

Record Keeper: Well, your advisor Haman is very popular. He’s shallow, thin-skinned, and instead of being honest, he’ll tell you whatever you want to hear.

King: Ah, that sounds perfect! Make it so!

Harem Keeper: O.K., folks, let’s give it up for our new prime minister- Haman!

All: Cheer

Haman: Thank you, Your Highness. And now, let me give you my first piece of advice.

King: Yes?

Haman: O Mighty One, we know that people bow to you when you pass by. But if they really honored you, they would also bow to your advisors.

King: My advisors?

Haman: Yes, my Perfect Potentate. They might bow to...oh...I don’t know...your prime minister for example.

King: Ah...I see. Yes, now I recall, it is written: “When the King stands high upon the mountain, those who kneel to him, kneel also to the dirt below.”

All: Yes...to the dirt below!

Haman: You have a unique way with words, Your Highness.

King: And you, Haman, are a man after my own heart. Put it in the Book of Records. Everyone must kneel to my servant Haman, just as they do to me.

All: Oh great idea, Fabulous, Super, Splendid work. Love the whole concept, etc.

King: Beginning...at once!

All: Ah!!

King: That’s better. Carry on, Haman, in my place.

Haman: Ahhh...This is the part I was born to play.

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Narrator: So everyone bowed low to Haman and honored him as the King commanded.

Haman: Did you say everyone?

Narrator: Yes.

Haman: Well then, that includes you.

Narrator: Oh...no, I'm the Narrator.

Haman: I don't care. The script says everyone kneels to me.

Narrator: Well, I'm sure it doesn't mean me.

Haman: Look, I have an important part here. You're just a meaningless extra. So get on your knees!

Narrator: O.K., O.K.

Haman: And that goes for you, too. I was the King's choice, not you.

Mordecai: No, thank you.

Haman: What did you say?

Mordecai: I said, “No, thank you.”

Haman: What's the meaning of this?

Narrator: It says: Now Mordecai refused to kneel to Haman, for Haman was an Amalekite.

Haman: I am?

Narrator: Yes, and Amalekites were enemies of the God of Israel.

Haman: So?

Narrator: So...Mordecai refused to honor a man who did not honor God.

Haman: I don't care about that religious nonsense. I'm a main character and he's supposed to kneel to me! Now kneel or you'll be sorry.

Mordecai: I said, “No.”

Haman: All right, you asked for it. I'll make you regret the day you were born.

All: Oooo....

Crowd 1: You better do what he says.

Crowd 2: Yeah, you're gonna be in big trouble if you don't.

Mordecai: I can't worry about trouble. I have to do what's right.

Crowd 3: Yeah, but he's the Prime MInister. He's got more lines.

Crowd 4: You gotta listen to him.

Mordecai: In the country I come from, we believe in a God who is more powerful than any prime minister. That's the ruler I have to obey.

“Stand Up”

Crowd 5: Even when the others around you fall?

Crowd 6: Even when believing can cost you all?

Crowd 7: Even when you're feelin' like you're all alone?

Crowd 8: Even when the road ahead's unknown?

Narrator: Now when Haman saw that Mordecai did not fear him, his anger grew, and he began to plot against Mordecai. In fact, he cast lots to decide a good day to get rid of all the Jewish people in Persia. And soon he went to the King with his plan.

Harem Keeper: The King will now see his loyal servant Haman! O.K....get in there and schmooze, Persia-boy.

Haman: Your Highness, I regret to say I have some shocking news.

King: What is it?

Haman: Most Awesome One, there are traitors in your kingdom.

King: Traitors!?

Haman: Yes. A certain group of people scattered throughout the land do not obey your laws.

King: Shocking!

Haman: Yes, it is, O Exalted One. I believe you must get rid of these troublemakers at once!

King: How?

Haman: My Gracious Lord, it would be my joy to handle all the unpleasant details. Just say the word, and I'll have them all destroyed.

King: Haman, your kindness touches me deeply. Take my royal ring and do whatever you need to do. And now, I wish to leave.

Haman: Guards!

Guards: Boom chucka-lucka-lucka, Boom chucka-lucka-lucka, Boom chucka-lucka-lucka, Boom!

“Chant 2”

Harem Keeper: Ladies and gentlemen, the King has left the building. I repeat, the King has left the building.

Haman: Well, isn't this fortunate. I seem to have a proclamation right here with me. And it's sealed with the King's ring. Keeper of the Records! Read this out.

Record Keeper: The King commands that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, all the people of Israel shall be destroyed, killed, and annihilated, and all of their goods shall be plundered.

Haman: So Mordecai, one way or another, you'll fall down before me.

Narrator: When Mordecai learned what Haman had done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes and sat at the King's gate in deep distress. And when Esther heard of his grief, she sent word to him asking what was wrong. And Mordecai wrote back a secret message.

Mordecai: My Daughter, Esther, our people are in great danger. You must go to the King at once, and beg for mercy.

Esther: Dearest Mordecai, no one may approach the King without being summoned. All who break this law are put to death. The only exception is for the King to raise his golden scepter and spare your life.

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Mordecai: My Dearest Daughter, if you remain silent, you will perish anyway. And who knows? It may be that God has placed you in the palace for just such a time as this.

Esther: Dearest Mordecai, Go, and gather all the Jewish people of the city to fast and pray for me, and I will pray as well. And after three days I will go to the King, even though it is against the law. And if I die, I die.

“Wings of the Dawn”

“Chant 3”

Narrator: On the third day, Esther took her place in the inner court of the palace in front of the King’s hall.

King: What is it, my Queen?

Esther: My King, I have a favor to ask.

King: It is written: “When courage speaks, a wise man listens.” Let the whole world know- this woman may ask me for anything, even up to half my kingdom!

Esther: Thank you, gracious King. My request is this: I want you to come to a special banquet I’m preparing. You too, Haman.

Haman: How thoughtful of you, Queen.

King: And then what?

Esther: And then, Your Highness, I’ll reveal what’s on my heart.

Haman: Oooo...that’s mysterious. You’re going to surprise us?

Esther: I’m certainly going to try.

King: Once again, my favored Queen, ask for whatever you want and I will grant it.

Narrator: That day, Haman hurried home in high spirits, confident of his power and position. And there he called together his friends and family for a party in his own honor.

Haman: My darling, Zareh...friends...Thank you so much for coming. Tonight I want to share some wonderful news. Queen Esther has personally chosen me-and me alone- to be a special guest at a great banquet for the King tomorrow night.

Friends: Oooooo.

Haman: So I have just one thing to say to all of you...I’m king of the world!!!

All: Cheer

Haman: Thank you. You like me....you really, really like me.

Zareh: Of course we do, my Persian peanut. Everyone loves you.

Haman: Well, not everyone.

Zareh: No?

Haman: No. There’s that horrible Mordecai who sits at the King’s gate every day and mocks me!

Zareh: Well, don’t you pay any attention to him.

Haman: I’m sorry, my precious kumquat. I just can’t help it.

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Zaresh: I know, my little lotus blossom! Why don't you build a seventy-five foot sharpened pole and hang Mordecai from it tomorrow? Then you'll be in a good mood for the King's dinner.

Friends: Hey, good idea, Yeah, Sounds great, etc.

Haman: Ah, my little Turkish Delight. You always know how to cheer me up. I'll talk to the King about it first thing in the morning.

Zaresh: And until then, my succulent fig, you can tell us again about your wonderful plans.

Friends: Yes, speech! Speech! Speech!

“It Would Take a Miracle”

Friend 1: Yeah, we'll show them!

All Friends: Yeah! Right! You got that right! Etc.

Zaresh: We're all with you, Darling.

All Friends: Yeah.

Friend 2: Three cheers!

All Friends: Haman! Haman! Haman!

Narrator: Much later that night in the palace, the King could not sleep.

King: Keeper of the Records!

Record Keeper: Yes, Your Highness.

King: Read to me from The Book of the Great Deeds of Government.

Harem Keeper: Fabulous idea, Your Highness. That'll put you to sleep for sure!

King: Just start anywhere.

Record Keeper: On the tenth day of the fifth month in the fourth year of the reign of the Mighty King of Persia, two men plotted to kill the King. But the King's faithful servant Mordecai overheard the plot and reported it, thus sparing the King's life. Later, on the fifteenth...

King: Stop! I remember when that happened. Did we ever reward this Mordecai?

Record Keeper: Uh...no, Your Highness.

Harem Keeper: Oh, tacky, tacky, tacky.

King: We should do something.

Harem Keeper: Oh, Your Highness, do I see a brainstorm coming?

King: I don't know. Where are my advisors when I need them?

Servant 2: Announcing the amazingly convenient arrival of Prime Minister Haman.

King: Haman! Just the man I want to see. How should I honor someone who has done me great service?

Haman: You want to honor someone?

King: Yes.

Haman: Someone close by, perhaps? Who's always looking out for you?

King: You've guessed it then.

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Haman: I think so! Well, give “that person” one of your robes, put him on one of your horses, and get one of your princes to parade him around the streets of the city proclaiming: Here is a man the King wishes to honor!

King: Splendid idea!

Haman: And can I modestly ask, O King- am I to be the one?

King: Yes, if you want to!

Haman: Oh, thank you, King!

King: You will be the one to lead the horse.

Haman: To...lead the horse?

King: Yes, just as you said. Now go get everything ready. I want to honor my faithful servant Mordecai this very day.

Haman: Mordecai?

Harem Keeper: Yes. Doesn't that just make your heart beat faster?

Haman: Mordecai?!

Narrator: So Haman was forced to honor Mordecai, the man he hated.

Haman: Oh, no...

Mordecai: Hello, Haman. Good to see you again.

Haman: Please...do I have to?

Narrator: It's in the script. We wouldn't want to cut anything from your big part.

Haman: It's impossible. We don't have a horse.

Narrator: Use your imagination.

Haman: You gotta be kidding. This is ridic...

Narrator: And before Haman had time to object further, he found himself out on the streets of the city. And there he led Mordecai up and down, shouting: This is a man the King delights to honor. Go ahead, shout it out.

Haman: This is a man the King delights to honor.

Crowd 10: What did you say?

Haman: This is a man the King delights to honor.

Crowd 11: I'm sorry. Could you repeat that just a little bit louder?

Haman: This is a man the King delights to honor!

Crowd 12: Ah...I think somebody's got a little love in his heart.

Guard Captain: Prime Minister Haman!

Haman: What?!

Guard Captain: The King has summoned you to the palace. The banquet is about to begin.

Haman: I'm getting a very bad feeling about this.

“This Is The Day”

King: And now Queen Esther, the moment has come. It's time to announce your request to the whole world. The one thing you wish from me, even up to half my kingdom is...?

“Malice In the Palace”

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Esther: My life and the life of my people.

King: What?

Esther: Your Highness, there is someone in your kingdom who wishes to kill me.

All: Gasp

King: Who would dare such a thing?!

Esther: The man I’m talking about is in this very room.

GASP

Haman: Don’t worry, Your Majesty, I’ll protect you.

Esther: THis man is also planning the death of my family and friends.

GASP

King: Tell me his name, and I will show that man the end of his plotting!

Esther: Your Highness...this is the man...Haman!

CRY OUT

King: Haman!

Esther: Yes, O King. I am one of the people of Israel, the very people this Haman is planning to destroy.

King: What is the meaning of this!?

Haman: Wait, there’s been a terrible mistake.

King: Indeed there has!

Haman: Now, Your Highness...Oh Great and Merciful and...Forgiving...Father of All...don’t do anything hasty. Remember, it is written: If you...if you’ve got a hot potato...uh...let it cool down for a while before you chew on it!”

King: I cannot stand to be in your presence! And I must think before I act! Arrrrrr!

All: Oooooo.....

Haman: Queen Esther, believe me, I had no idea you were one of those lovely people of Israel. Of course, when I said I wanted to kill all of you, I meant it in the best possible way...Oooooo, please, please, please, don’t let him kill me....

Esther: Please, let go of me!

Haman: I always thought you were a very nice person. Really I did.

Esther: Please stop! You’re hurting me!

Haman: No, no, no. I love you, I love you, I love you, really I do...

All: Ah!

King: Silence! It’s not enough that you plot against my Queen. Now you would put your hands on her in my own palace? Well I say it is written: “You...are...dead...meat!”

Haman: Now wait just a minute...

“Chant 4”

Haman: Come on, what are you doing? Now wait...this is n’t funny....Stop, let me go, this isn’t right...Stop!!! I don’t want to do this any more.

Narrator: What’s wrong...Isn’t this the role you were born to play?

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Haman: O.K....Maybe I was wrong. I guess...I just thought it was the most important part.

Narrator: It's not?

Haman: I don't know. I mean...I didn't know it ended like this.

King: How does it end?

Narrator: Because of the faithfulness of Esther, Haman's plan was defeated, and Haman received the very punishment he had planned for Mordecai.

All: Ooo.

Haman: O.K. I admit it. Maybe some other parts were more important than mine.

Mordecai: Thank you.

Narrator: And so the people of God were saved.

“A Simple Prayer”

Narrator: Well, I think you can see we had everything we needed to tell a story.

King: A king...

Esther: A queen...

Haman: A prime minister...

Mordecai: A faithful servant...

Harem Keeper: And many others.

Narrator: And whenever the story is told, all God's people-great and small-celebrate the One who has placed us where we are for a reason.

Harem Keeper: So...let's celebrate

All: Woohoo!

“God Is Our God”