

**SHUSHAN 4G – updated!**  
**Purim 2015**  
**Congregation Beth Israel, Chico, California**

**By Shira Danan**

***Chapter 1***

**Narrator**

And it came to pass in the land of Shushan that King Ahashuerus bought himself a sweet new smart phone and wanted to show it off. So he held a party, inviting guests from all of the 127 kingdoms he ruled, and planned for the party to go on for as long as it took him to say to each and every guest “I have an app for that.”

**Guest**

King, I am impressed by the sumptuousness of your electronics,

**King**

Thank you, my friend. Here, have an iPhone 6 plus.

**Guest**

*(bending it)*

Oh wow, it’s so flexible. Which reminds me, where is your wife, Vashti?

**King**

Hang on let me text her. (Typing) Vashti, please come down and greet the guests. (Laughs) Haha, autocorrect changed “greet” to “dance naked in front of.” Nice. Send!

**Narrator**

Meanwhile, Vashti was entertaining her own guests...

**Vashti**

Okay now turn it. (Turns iPad)

**Vashti’s Guests**

Oooh.

**Vashti**

(receives text, checks phone) What? Dance naked?? I haven’t done that since we were teenagers and got those really excellent poppy hamentaschen from Srulik the Taschen-Pusher.

**Narrator**

Vashti stalked off angrily, taking with her a Kindle Fire, her Apple Watch, and an old iPhone 5S that she thought would someday be considered an antique.

**King**

(Looking at phone) "I'm leaving you for Evan?" Who's Evan?

**Guest**

Maybe she meant to type "for-ever."

**Narrator**

She didn't. Evan was the pool boy.

**King**

Either way, I'm banishing her! (He raises his scepter into the air, then tucks it under one arm so he can type her a text message.)

**Chapter 2**

**Narrator**

Meanwhile, in the far reaches of Shushan, Esther the beautiful maiden and her Uncle Mordechai were living in poverty, their clunky Asis computer barely able to operate Flight Simulator. Nonetheless, they were religious people, and Mordechai prayed to God daily for an Xbox One.

**Mordechai**

(To the heavens) Not for myself, but for my poor niece.

*(Esther rolls her eyes.)*

**Esther**

(Pointing at their computer) Look Uncle, a message!

**Mordechai**

An email?! You mean the internet is working for once?

**Esther**

No look, the postman left a letter on top of the computer. (Opens it) All the eligible women of the kingdom are requested to submit a YouTube video explaining why you would make a great new queen. Log on to [shushanvideo.com](http://shushanvideo.com) to submit your video. No fatties or vegans.

**Mordechai**

That sure sounds like state-mandated fun! Let's steal the neighbor's wireless signal and do this thing.

**Narrator**

Mordechai and Esther did their best to create a spectacular YouTube video. They used all the special effects they could think of, included some shots of cute animals sleeping, and filmed Esther fighting with a lion. They titled the video, "Future queen fights Lion Oh My Hashem you have to see this exclamation point exclamation point exclamation point." The king was impressed.

**Ahashuerus**

(Looking at his smart phone) Oh man, this is totally sweet!

**Narrator**

Ahashuerus chose Esther to be his bride, not only because she was beautiful and had mad video editing skills, but because he wanted to be able to introduce her to all his friends as that chick who fought a lion on YouTube.

**Ahashuerus**

I think I'm in love.

**Esther**

I can't believe I get to marry the king...

**Mordechai**

(To Esther) Just don't tell him you're Jewish.

**Esther**

Why not?

**Mordechai**

Everyone already thinks the Jews control the media. If they find out that we actually do make all their beloved animal-related YouTube videos, they'll be understandably upset.

**Narrator**

Meanwhile, back at the Kingdom, two of Ahashuerus's so-called Facebook friends, Bigthan and Teresh, were plotting to reveal naked photos he had once sent Vashti in a hamentaschen-fueled haze. And to kill him!

**Bigthan**

(typing) Honestly, I think it's his own fault for taking the photos in the first place. That's just idiotic in this day and age. Let's sell the photos for as much money as possible...and then kill him!

**Teresh**

(typing) Yeah, let's leak those photos to TMZ...And then kill him!

**Narrator**

Little did they know that Bigthan had left a computer logged into his Gmail account at the Shushan Internet Cafe, which Mordechai frequented because of his poor service at home. Mordechai accidentally read the entire months-long email exchange between the two. He was horrified.

**Mordechai**

I could care less about the naked photos. It's the media frenzy that would follow that would be really annoying.

**Narrator**

Mordechai dashed off an email to [tips@ahashuerusstayingalive.com](mailto:tips@ahashuerusstayingalive.com). The webmaster eventually got to his email a couple of weeks later and was astonished! He immediately sent a message to the King, who quickly had his hard drive erased and then left himself a voice memo to thank that guy who saved his dignity...and his life!...sometime.

**Chapter 3**

**Narrator**

It came to pass that Ahashuerus, who was very foolish indeed, lost a game of Guitar Hero to his buddy Haman. He was forced to promote his friend to the highest position possible for non-royalty.

**Haman**

And I want everyone to follow my new Tumblr,  
JustSomeThoughtsFromHaman.tumblr.com.

**Narrator**

All of the people of Shushan dutifully followed  
JustSomeThoughtsFromHaman.tumblr.com, even though his blog was mostly "artsy"  
black and white photographs of himself and inane musings on the show *Breaking Bad*.  
But Mordechai refused.

**Mordechai**

I don't want that nonsense clogging up my Tumblr feed. I will not bow to Haman's  
request.

**Haman**

But you have to! Bow to my request!

**Mordechai**

Never, I only bow to the Lord God Hashem!

**Haman**

At least link to my blog from your blog.

**Narrator**

But Mordechai refused. Haman was infuriated. He googled “Lord God Hashem” and discovered that this was the god of the Jews.

**Haman**

So Mordechai is a Jew, is he? I’ll wipe out these Jews if it’s the last thing I do!

**Lackey**

When, sire?

**Haman**

Let’s see...My evil lot-casting app says...the 13<sup>th</sup> of Adar. Put a notice in the Weekly Royal E-Newsletter that on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Adar, all of the Jews of all of the Provinces of Persia will be put to death.

**Lackey**

Sire, is it wise to publicize the massacre of the Jews in the Weekly Royal E-Newsletter?

**Haman**

Sure, why not? Nobody reads it.

#### ***Chapter Four***

**Narrator**

But Haman was wrong. There was one person that studiously read the Weekly Royal E-Newsletter every Monday. That person was Mordechai. And he was furious.

**Mordechai**

I am furious.

**Narrator**

Mordechai put on sackcloth and covered himself with ashes.

**Mordechai**

Amazon Prime will send you a big box of ashes in 2 days, with no charge for shipping!

**Narrator**

He forwarded the message to his friends, who forwarded it to their friends, who forwarded it to their friends. As one, he and all the other Jews who had heard the news opened their Weekly Royal E-Newsletters, hit “reply,” and typed that single, fateful word: Unsubscribe.

**Mordechai**

(on phone)

Esther, you have to do something. You have to speak to the king directly!

**Esther**

Okay, sure. I’ll ask him about it when we FaceTime later tonight.

**Mordechai**

No, Esther. This is the kind of conversation that needs to take place...IN PERSON.

**Esther**

(gasps)

But the king will surely kill me if I speak to him IN PERSON without being summoned. He’s said it a thousand times: if you want to reach him about something important, email is best.

**Mordechai**

I’m afraid IN PERSON is the only way.

**Narrator**

Esther was terrified, but she knew that Mordechai was right. She had Mordechai send out a WhatsApp message to all the Jews of Persia to go without food or drink or logging on to Facebook for three days and three nights.

**Esther**

After that I will approach the king IN PERSON, even though he really hates when people do that, and if I perish, I perish.

**Chapter Five**

**Narrator**

On the third day of fasting, Esther tried hard to remember what it was like to interact with someone IN PERSON.

**Esther**

(holding out handshake)

Hel-LO. No, that’s not right. HEL-lo.

**Narrator**

She took off her bathrobe and flip-flops and put on real clothes. At the last minute, in a move that ensured the future of the Jewish people, she remembered to shower. Finally, she was ready to see the king...IN PERSON.

**Ahashuerus**

(looking at computer)

Now let's build a factory there. But knock down that community center. That seems lame.

(sees Esther)

Oh, hey, Esther!

**Narrator**

The king extended his computer mouse to Esther. She breathed a deep sigh of relief.

**Esther**

HEL-lo, my king.

**Ahashuerus**

Check out this awesome game I'm playing.

**Esther**

Is that the Sims?

**Ahashuerus**

No, I think it's called "Annual Shushan Building Plans." So, what's up?

**Esther**

I just wanted to...um...I wanted to invite you and Haman to lunch tomorrow. At my place.

**Ahashuerus**

Oh cool, well send me the Evite.

**Esther**

No, there's no Evite. It's um...just the two of you.

**Ahashuerus**

Oh. Well. Okay, who else is on the guest list?

**Esther**

Haman.

**Ahashuerus**

Okay...so has he Not Yet Replied, said he's Not Attending, or is he Attending for sure? What's the Location? What Time is the event? Who should I call if it rains? Is this more of an Evite-type event or a Paperless Post shindig?

**Esther**

Um...

**Narrator**

Lunch seemed to go well. Esther got on her favorite food blogs and put together a tasty pumpkin ravioli dish with rosemary butter sauce.

**Ahashuerus**

Hey, remember when you fought that lion?

**Esther**

Yeah.

**Ahashuerus**

That was sweet.

**Esther**

Thanks.

**Ahashuerus**

So, Esther, lemme ask you something. What's this feast all about? Do you, like, want something? Cause I mean if you do, it's yours, up to half my kingdom, as long as the shipping costs aren't astronomical.

**Esther**

Thank you, my king. I guess what I really want is...for you guys to come over for lunch again tomorrow.

**Narrator**

Ahashuerus and Haman agreed to return the next day. Haman was feeling very pleased with himself and went home and put up a selfie on Instagram with the hashtag "best day ever." Then he checked his blog's stats, and remembered that Mordechai still hadn't followed him.

**Haman**

That jerk! Honey, do we have any extra gallows around?



**Zeresh**

Oh sure, they're in the garage. We'll set 'em up tonight and then tomorrow you can tell Ahashuerus to hang Mordechai on them.

**Haman**

(breathes sigh of relief)  
Thanks, babe. I feel better already.

### ***Chapter Six***

**Narrator**

That night, the king couldn't sleep. He kept looking at the Facebook photos of his friends from high school and wasting time on BuzzFeed.

**Ahashuerus**

"25 things only people who rule the Kingdom Persia will understand"? That is so me!

**Narrator**

Finally, feeling bored, he switched on his iPhone and listened to his latest voice memos.

**Ahashuerus**

Oh yeah...I remember when that Mordechai dude saved my dignity...and my life! I should do something nice for him.  
(dials phone)

**Haman**

Yo.

**Ahashuerus**

Hey Haman, what's up? Can I ask you a favor? What would be like the awesomest thing I could possibly do for someone really, really cool?

**Narrator**

Haman thought the king meant him.

**Haman**

Gosh, I guess you could get him a book deal for his blog. Maybe a \$100 iTunes giftcard. And perhaps a parade through town in his honor in the choicest garments available? I'm just spitballing.

**Ahashuerus**

That sounds perfect. Can you arrange all of that for Mordechai?

**Haman**

Mordechai?!

**Narrator**

Haman was furious.

**Haman**

I am furious.

**Narrator**

But he had no choice but to follow the king's orders. And so it was that Mordechai's blog, *Musings From Mordechai*, became a bestselling book and was later optioned for a film starring Dustin Hoffman. Mordechai dressed in beautiful robes and Haman grumpily lead him through town in a parade. And later that night, when the city of Shushan was fast asleep, Mordechai blew \$100 on Klezmer music on iTunes. All was right with the world.

### ***Chapter Seven***

**Narrator**

The next day, Esther got on her food blogs and decided to make a feast of savoury crepes with a thyme-lemon sauce and organic clementine clafoutis.

**Ahashuerus**

This food is truly scrumptious, my queen.

**Esther**

Thank you, my king.

**Ahashuerus**

And now, please. Tell us why you have asked us to lunch once again. If there's anything you want, you can have it, up to half my kingdom--even my HBO Go password.

**Esther**

Thank you, my king. I don't quite know how to put this...

**Ahashuerus**

Are you saying you want to be on my family plan? Because we can talk about it.

**Esther**

What I want is more valuable even than unlimited data. It is nothing less than for you to save the lives of my people!

**Ahashuerus**

(gasps)

More valuable than unlimited data? And what's this about saving your people?

**Esther**

Don't you see? I am a Jew. It's why I understand the jokes on *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and you don't. And the one who threatens us Jews is your horrid advisor—Haman!

**Haman**

No, wait!

**Ahashuerus**

Haman? You? But why would you want to hurt my darling Esther?

**Haman**

Because...because of my blog!

**Ahashuerus**

That's it! Guards, take him away!

*Guards come and grab Haman.*

**Guard 1**

Hang him on the gallows he built to hang Mordechai.

**Guard 2**

Let him tweet about the irony!

**Chapter Eight**

**Narrator**

All of the Jews of Shushan celebrated Haman's demise. Then they briefly wondered what the three remaining chapters could possibly contain. Oh right, the Jews were still scheduled to be massacred.

**Esther**

Can't we do anything to stop the massacre, oh king?

**Ahashuerus**

I've tried before and I'm afraid it is not possible. An official edict, once sent, cannot be unsent. But here, you and your Uncle Mordechai—take my Twitter password. You can tweet out whatever you want to my 2 million followers.

**Mordechai**

Then I will tweet @TheJews a message telling them that they can defend themselves!

**Esther**

Hashtag Let's Do This.

**Chapter Nine**

**Narrator**

On that fateful day in Adar, the Jews of Persia rose up to defend themselves. They fought bravely and fiercely, and many of their attackers fell in battle.

**Ahashuerus**

I have heard that many have died in Shushan today. When will the killing end? It's hard to hear *Say Yes To The Dress* over the noise of battle.

**Esther**

Just one more thing, King. Let the Jews hang the ten sons of Haman. We're pretty sure that will get our point across.

**Narrator**

So Ahashuerus wrote the law and crossed his fingers that Kelly would pick the floor-length mermaid cut with all the beading. The next day the 10 sons of Haman were hung from the gallows: Parshandata, Dalfon, Aspata, Porata, Adalya, Aridata, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizata.

**Mordechai**

Which explains why those are such unpopular names these days.

**Narrator**

Meanwhile, in the other provinces, the Jews killed 75,000 of their attackers, despite attempts by the bad guys to shut down the internet and prevent them from using Twitter to plan their counter-attack. With the help of social media, the Jews survived.

**Esther**

We will call this day Purim, because Haman drew "purim," or lots.

**Mordechai**

We have turned our sadness into joy, and so we have much to celebrate on this day.

***Chapter Ten***

**Narrator**

For many years, Mordechai helped rule the kingdom wisely and fairly. He did away with the Weekly Royal E-Newsletter and created a user-friendly website that people could check if and when they wanted to. He moderated the Shushan sub-reddit with a just and even-handed touch. Throughout all of Shushan there was much rejoicing that Mordechai was their leader.

Esther and Ahashuerus found out that they both really liked Marvel cosplay and the show *Dr. Who*.

And somewhere on the exotic and beautiful Comoros Islands, Vashti and Evan lived happily ever after.