### Esther

## Chapter 1

1This all happened in the days of ArtaXerxes (the ArtaXerxes that ruled an area of 127 regions all the way to India).  
  
2Back in those days, after ArtaXerxes had been enthroned as king in the City of Back in those days, after ArtaXerxes had been enthroned as king in the City of <span class="placename">SusaBack in those days, after ArtaXerxes had been enthroned as king in the City of <span class="placename">Susa</span> and 3during the 3rd year of his reign, he held a great [wedding] banquet to which he invited his friends, foreign dignitaries, the most honorable Medes and Persians, and those who were in charge of the governors of the various regions.  
  
4Then, over the next 180 days, he took them and showed them all the wealth of his kingdom and the glory of the things that he’d accomplished.  
  
  
5Well, after the days for celebrating his wedding were completed, the king held another banquet inside the courtyard of the king’s palace for the foreigners who lived in his city, which lasted 7 more days.  
  
6The [banquet] area was decorated with fine linen and cotton cloth that was stretched over lines of fine linen and purple cloth, which were fastened with gold and silver cubes to Parian-marble columns.  
  
7[There were also] beds of gold and silver on a Parian-marble floor [that was set with] emerald stones and mother of pearl, and this was strewn with transparent beds that were variously decorated with cups of gold and silver.  
  
In addition, they had an abundance of the finest wines (the type that was reserved for the king).  
  
8The banquet wasn’t handled as it was specified in their laws, but because that’s the way the king wanted it, he gave instructions to those who were in charge of the workers to handle things his way.  
  
  
9Meanwhile, Astin (the queen) was holding a banquet for the women of the kingdom in the same place where ArtaXerxes was holding his.  
  
10Then on the 7th day, because the king was in a particularly happy mood, he gave orders to HaMan, BizTha, Harbona, BigTha, AbagTha, Zethar, and Carcas (the king’s 7 [most trusted] eunuchs) to bring the queen to him, 11so she could receive her coronation and be given a royal turban, and so that he could display her beauty before all the princes and the foreigners (because she was very beautiful).  
  
12But Queen Astin refused to go along with the eunuchs, which made the king very angry.  
  
13So he said to his friends:  
  
 ‘If this is how Astin has chosen to answer, then you deal with this matter according to the law and judge her!’  
  
14Well, Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, TarShish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan (the 7 sub-rulers of the Persians and Medes who were closest to the king and who sat by him) came forward 15and told the king what the laws required them to do to Queen Astin for not following the orders that the king had given to his eunuchs.  
  
16Memucan spoke and said this to him and to the other rulers:  
  
 ‘Not only has Queen Astin dishonored the king, but she has dishonored all of the king’s rulers and leaders.’  
  
17Then after describing to them all the things that the queen had said and how she had disobeyed the king, he proclaimed:  
  
 ‘Because she has disobeyed King ArtaXerxes, 18and because all the wives of the sub-rulers and leaders of the Persians and Medes have heard what the queen said, they might also dare to dishonor their husbands!  
  
 19‘Therefore, if it seems good to the king, let him write out and sign a royal decree passing a law among the Medes and Persians that she should not be treated as the queen and that she may no longer sleep with the king.  
  
 ‘Then may the king find a woman better than her!  
  
 20‘This law should be announced throughout the entire kingdom, so that all the women will learn to respect their men, both the rich and the poor!’  
  
21Well, because what he said pleased the king and his rulers, the king did as Memucan had proposed... 22He sent a proclamation everywhere throughout his entire realm in each of their languages, requiring women to show respect for the men in their households.