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 AHASHVEROSHER enters.

KING AHASHVEROSHER
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 AHASHVEROSHER
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 AHASHVEROSHER
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 a lot 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 ferklempt. 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

Okaaay. 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
Sorryyyyy!

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?! Nooooooowooo.

KING AHASHVEROSH
No?

HAMAN
I mean: yessssssssssss.

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!