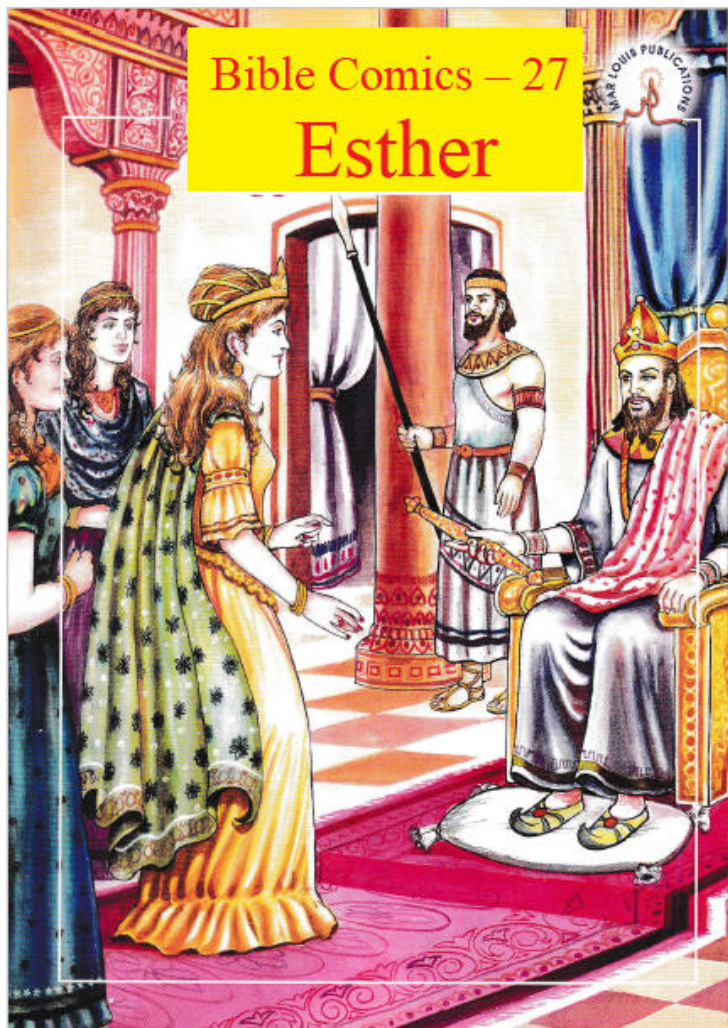


Bible Comics – 27

# Esther



# ESTHER

The book of Esther narrates how the Jews living in various provinces of the Persian Empire were saved from cruel persecution and total extermination by the intervention of a woman. Like the book of Daniel, Esther also was written during the persecution of Antiochus IV, in order to give hope and strength to the people who suffer for their faith. It gives an explanation concerning the origin of the feast of “Purim” (which means ‘lots’) that was celebrated by the Jews every year with great joy and merriment.

Two different versions of this book, namely, Hebrew and Greek, have come down to us. The latter is almost one third larger than the former version. The council of Trent (A.D. 1546) took the Greek version as the inspired text, whereas the Protestant churches consider the Greek additions as apocryphal, that is, not divinely inspired. The present story takes into account both versions.

Though the book of Esther is presented as a historical narrative, we can notice a number of historical inaccuracies and evident exaggerations

in it. Mordechai, who was among the Israelites deported by Nebuchadnezzar in B.C. 587, is appointed the Prime Minister of the Persian king Ahasuerus who reigned from B.C. 486 to 465. It is rather strange that a Persian king approved the genocide of the Jews, especially because the Persians were famous for their tolerance towards all religions and cultures in the empire. The 180 days' feast that Ahasuerus prepared for his satraps, the one year preparation of the maidens, the enormous amount (ten thousand talents, approximately ten billion dollars) that Haman



promised the king – these are but some of the examples of exaggerations in the book. Because of these reasons, the book of Esther is today understood as a historical romance rather than a historical narrative. It is related to a historical person, Ahasuerus, and written for instruction and edification.

Three characters in the story, namely, Esther, Haman and Mordechai, deserve special attention. Even when elevated to the high position of the queen, Esther does not forget her humble origin. She risks her life to save her people from

extermination. This heroic act is an anticipation of Jesus' teaching on love: "Greater love has no one than this that one lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15.13). It is after three days of severe penance and continuous prayer that Esther approaches the throne uninvited, well aware of the fact that if the king refused to grant her an audience she would be put to death. By this she is proclaiming that her trust is in God alone.

By refusing to bend his knees before Haman, Mordechai is strictly obeying the first commandment and confessing the Lordship of

God. At the same time he asserts that no human being shall be given the honour and worship that is due to God alone. Haman's death on the gallows he prepared for Mordechai is an example of the disaster that pride and arrogance bring. The firm determination of the queen Vashti not to appear before a group of drunken leaders is a declaration of the dignity of woman, while Esther is a splendid model of the self-sacrificing service that women can render to the society.

Bible Comics – 27

# Esther

Script

Rev. Dr. Michael Karimattam

Illustration

Devassy & Benny

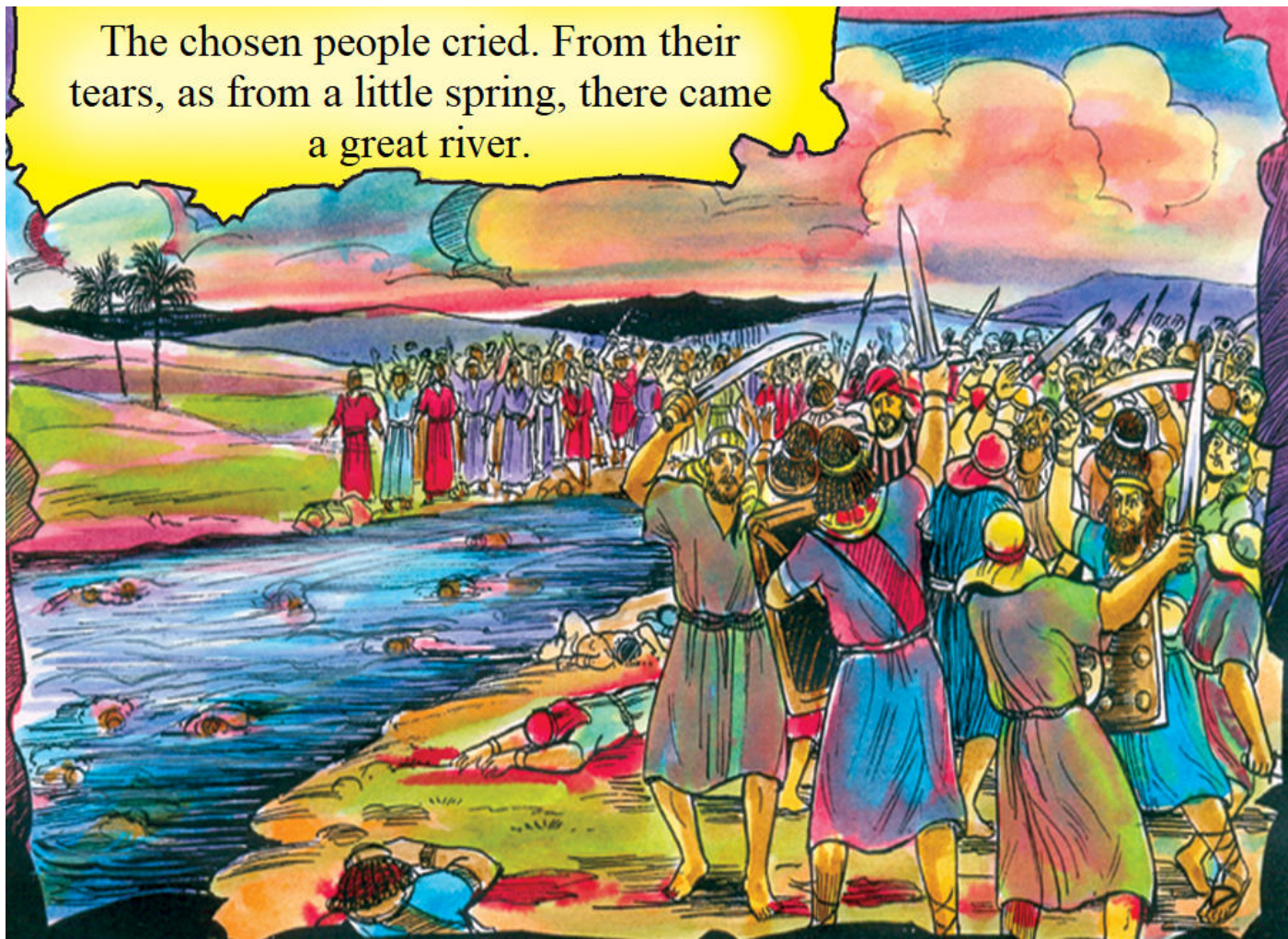
In Susa, Capital of the Persian Empire, there lived an exiled Jew named Mordecai. During the second year of Ahasures, Emperor of Persia, Mordecai had a dream.

A furious battle between two monsters, their roars, caused the earth to tremble. Nations got together and fought against the chosen people of God.

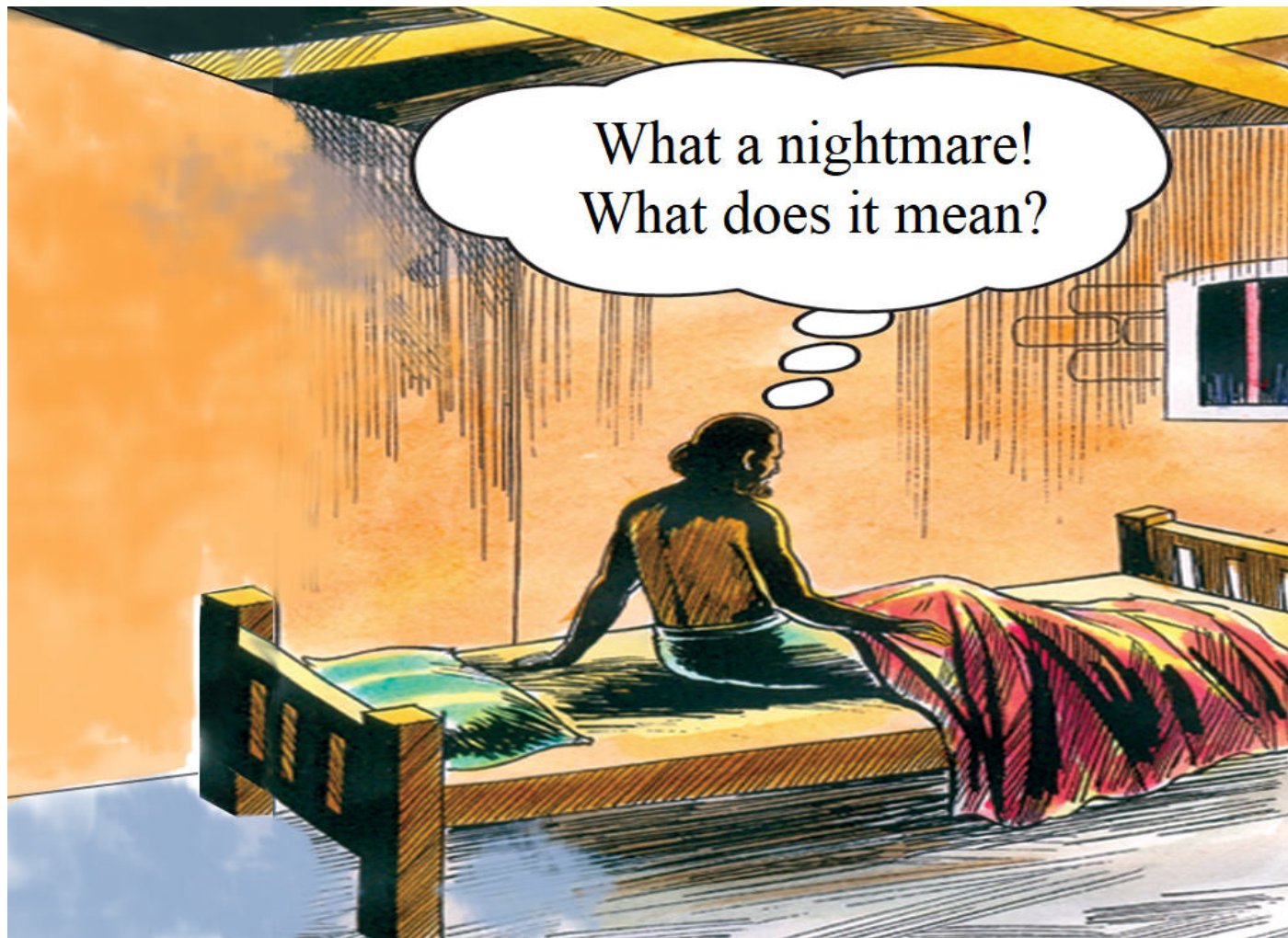




The chosen people cried. From their  
tears, as from a little spring, there came  
a great river.



What a nightmare!  
What does it mean?





Some disaster is about to befall us. Anyway, I think I'll go to the Palace gate.

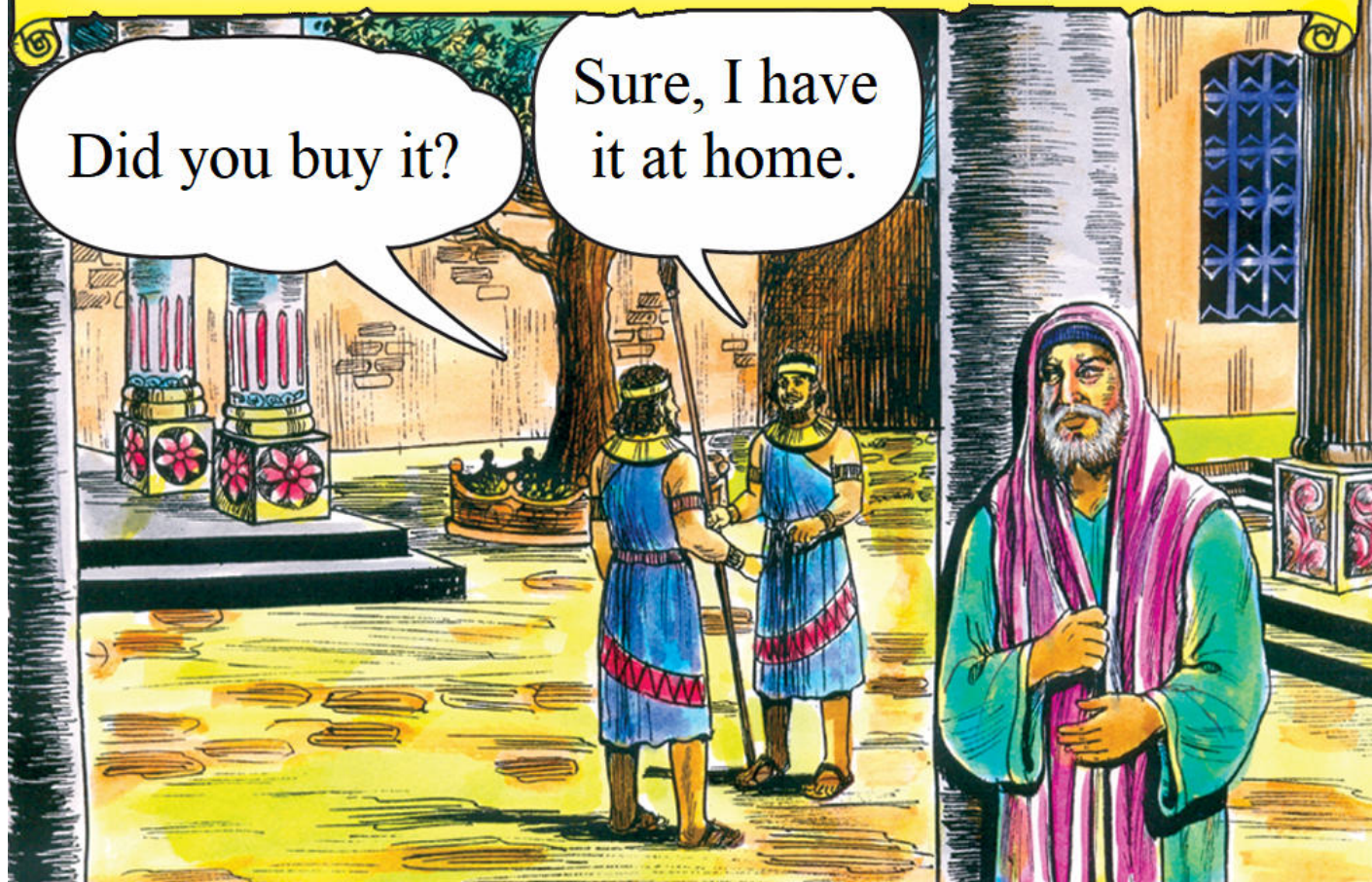




While resting in the courtyard, Mordecai overheard a conversation between two palace guards.

Did you buy it?

Sure, I have it at home.



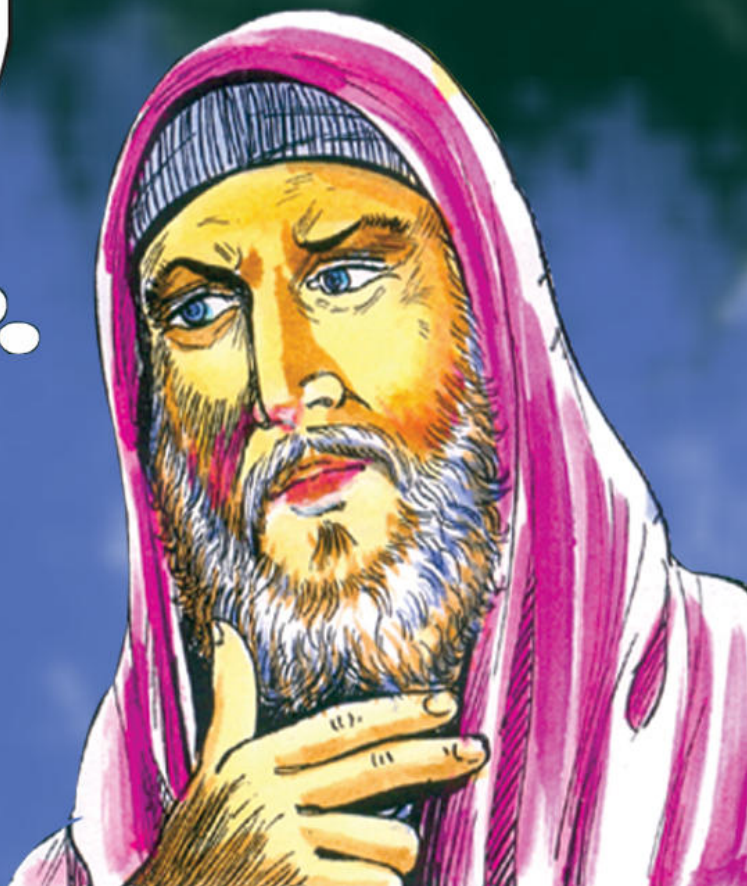
Give it to the chef this evening and ask him to add it to the king's supper.

Tomorrow Ahasuerus will be a corpse. Nobody will suspect anything.





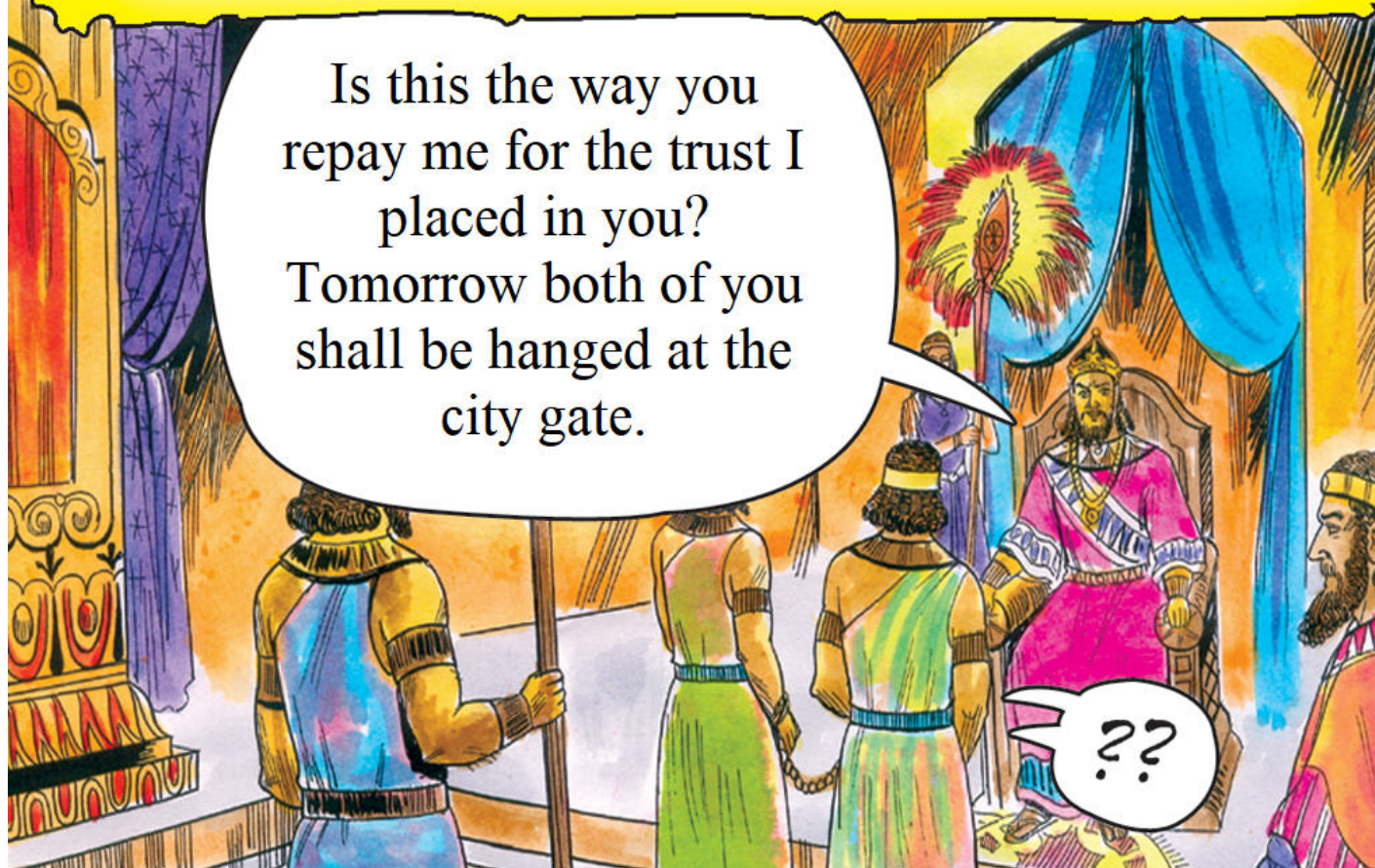
They are planning  
to poison the king.  
They must be  
stopped.

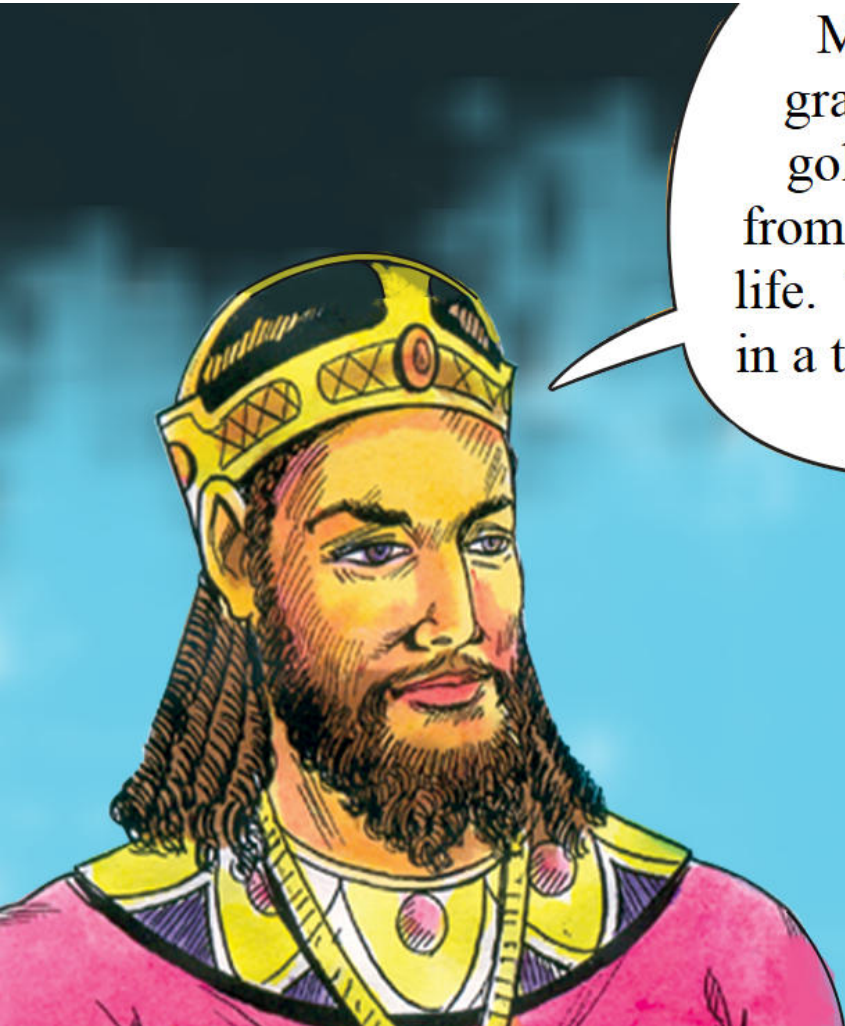


Informed by Mordecai, the king examined them under torture and they confessed.

Is this the way you  
repay me for the trust I  
placed in you?  
Tomorrow both of you  
shall be hanged at the  
city gate.

??





Mordecai shall be  
granted ten talents of  
gold and exemptions  
from taxes for saving my  
life. This shall be written  
in a tablet and kept in the  
archives.



Hearing this Haman became  
furious.

Mordecai, you ruined our  
plans and killed my  
servants. You'll pay for this  
with your life.



After some time king Ahasuerus gave a party to all the Nobles and governors of the Persian Empire.





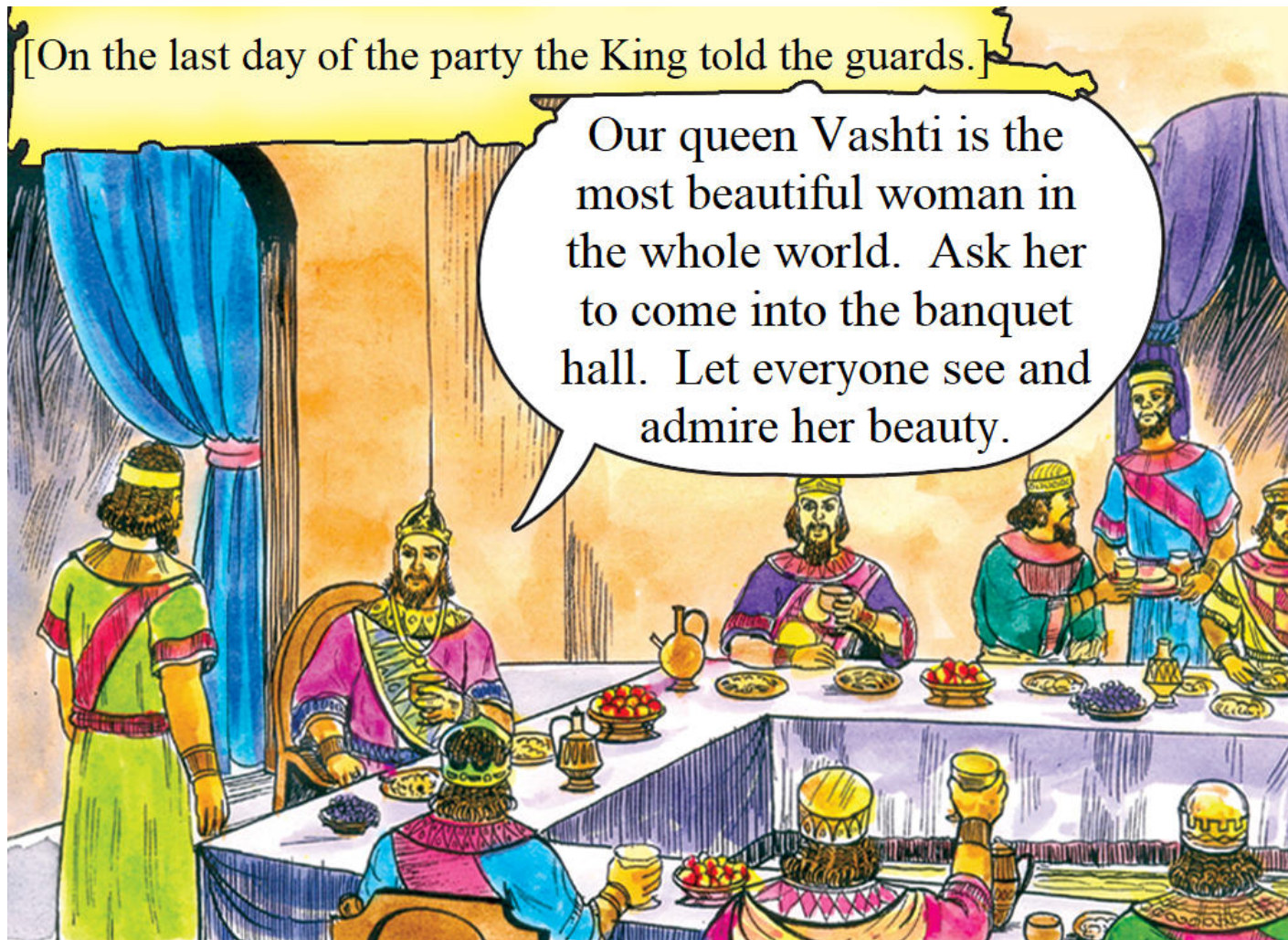
Queen Vashi, wife of Ahasuerus also gave a party to the women in the palace.





[On the last day of the party the King told the guards.]

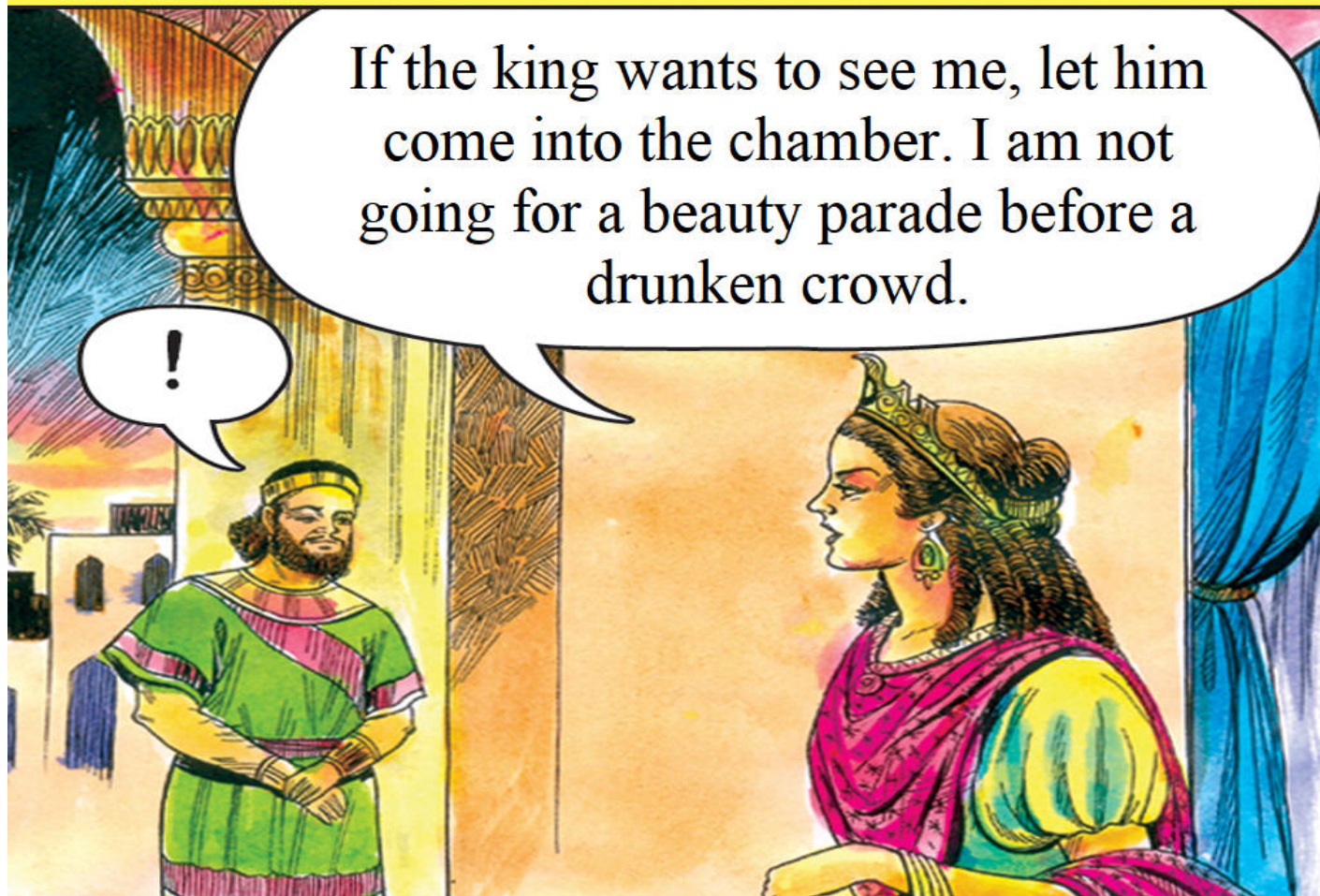
Our queen Vashti is the most beautiful woman in the whole world. Ask her to come into the banquet hall. Let everyone see and admire her beauty.



When the guards told the queen.

If the king wants to see me, let him come into the chamber. I am not going for a beauty parade before a drunken crowd.

!





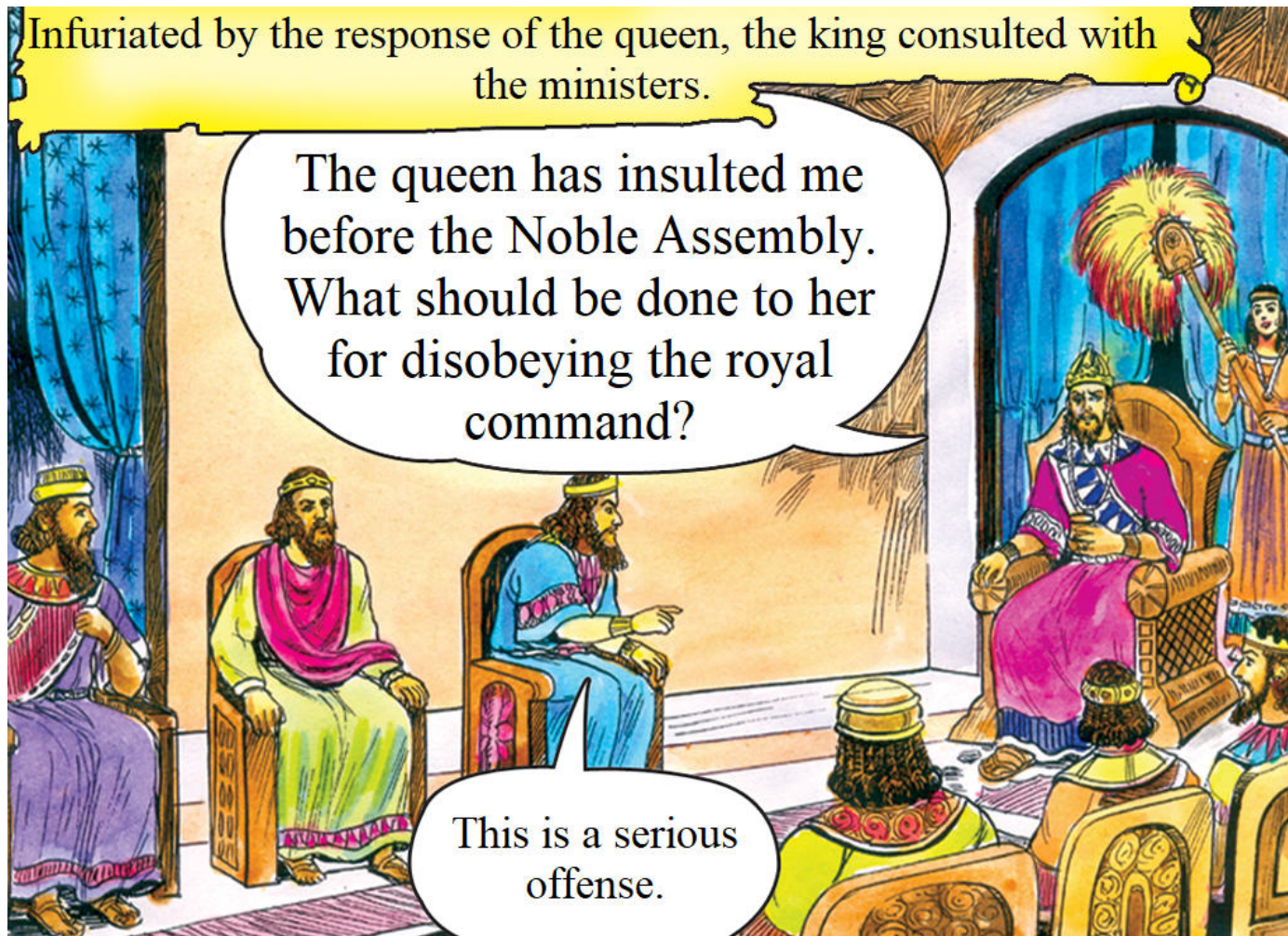


What an insult. There should be a limit to what a woman is asked to submit herself to.

Infuriated by the response of the queen, the king consulted with the ministers.

The queen has insulted me  
before the Noble Assembly.  
What should be done to her  
for disobeying the royal  
command?

This is a serious  
offense.

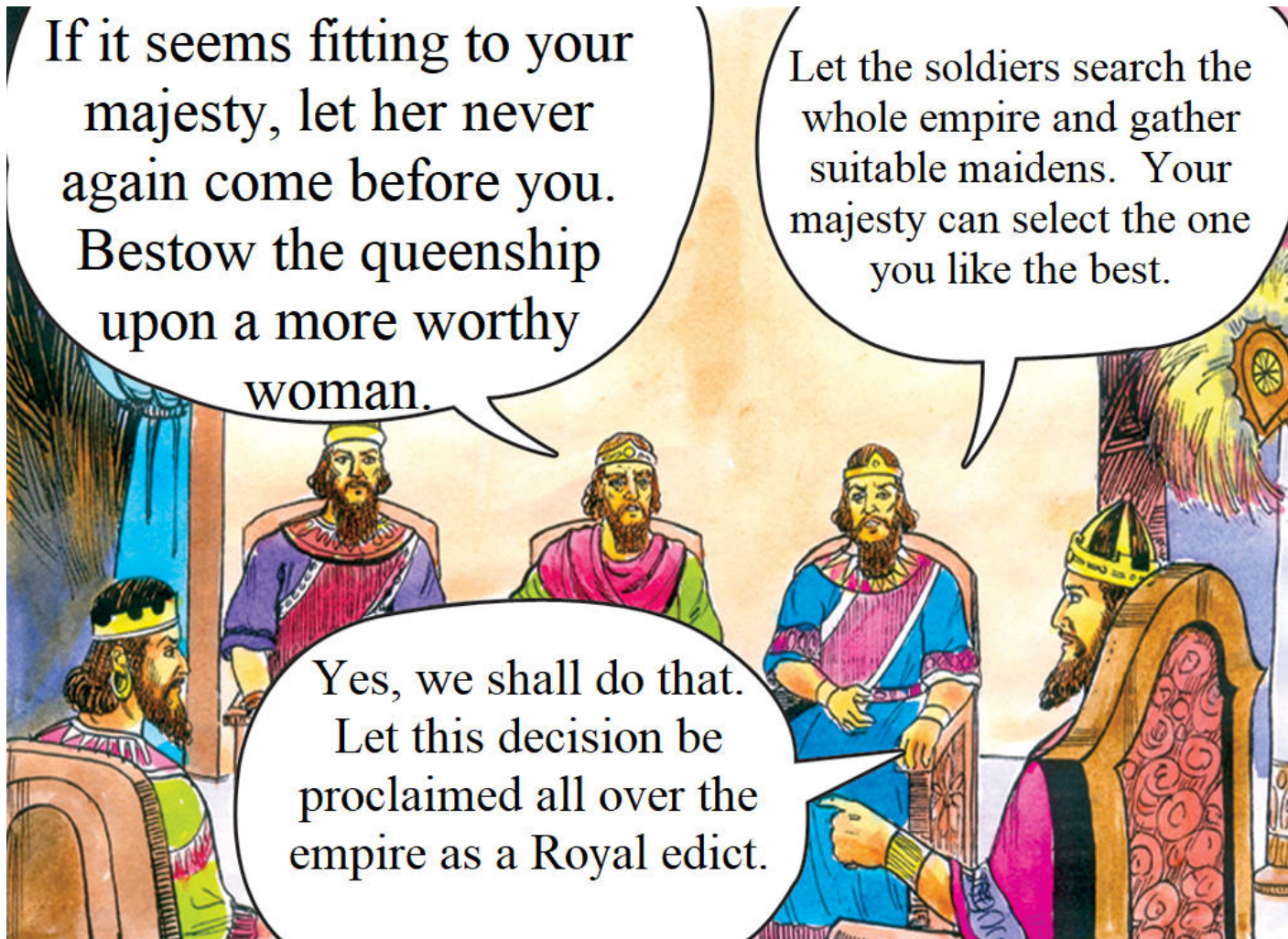




If it seems fitting to your majesty, let her never again come before you. Bestow the queenship upon a more worthy woman.

Let the soldiers search the whole empire and gather suitable maidens. Your majesty can select the one you like the best.

Yes, we shall do that.  
Let this decision be proclaimed all over the empire as a Royal edict.

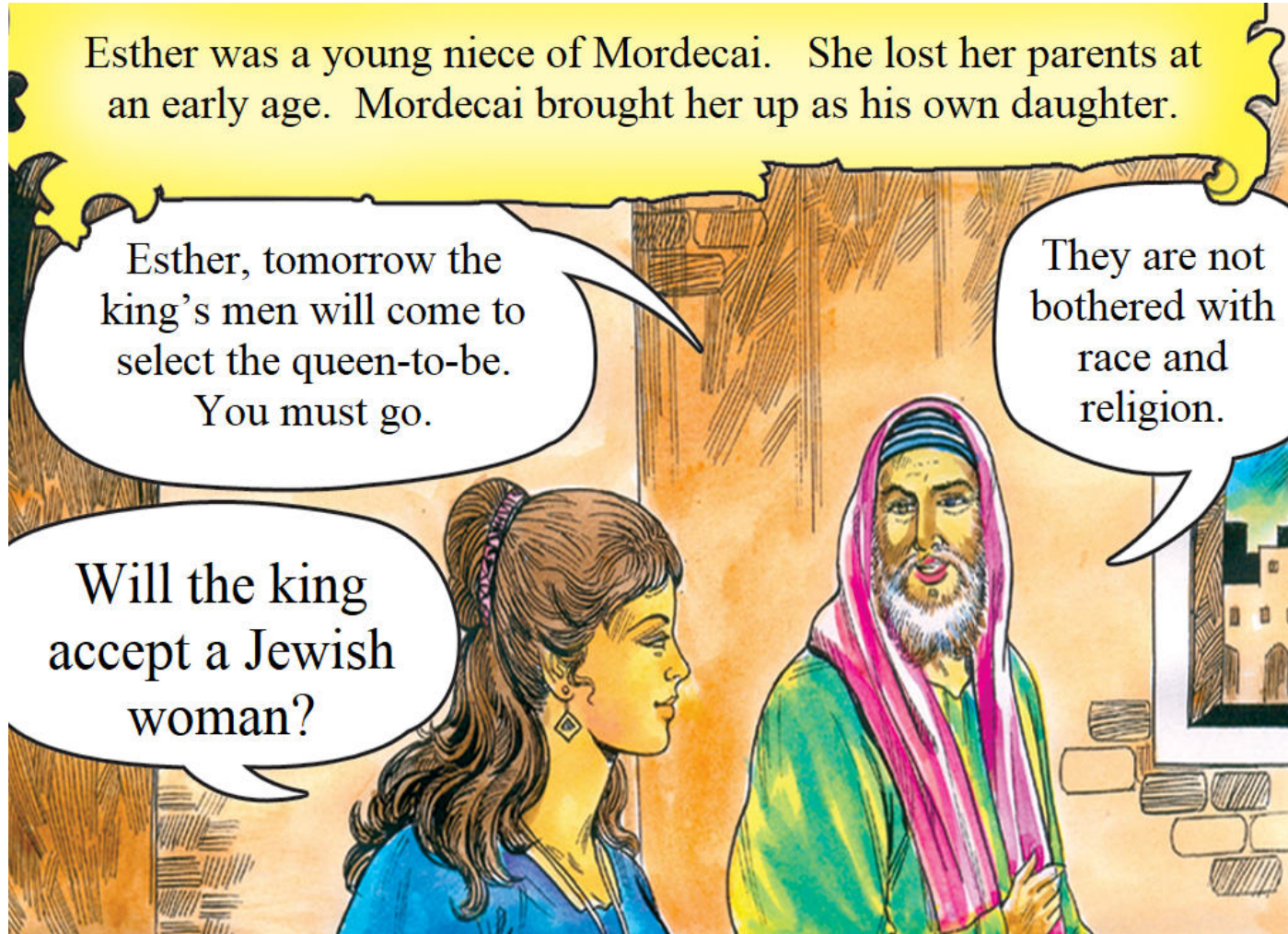


Esther was a young niece of Mordecai. She lost her parents at an early age. Mordecai brought her up as his own daughter.

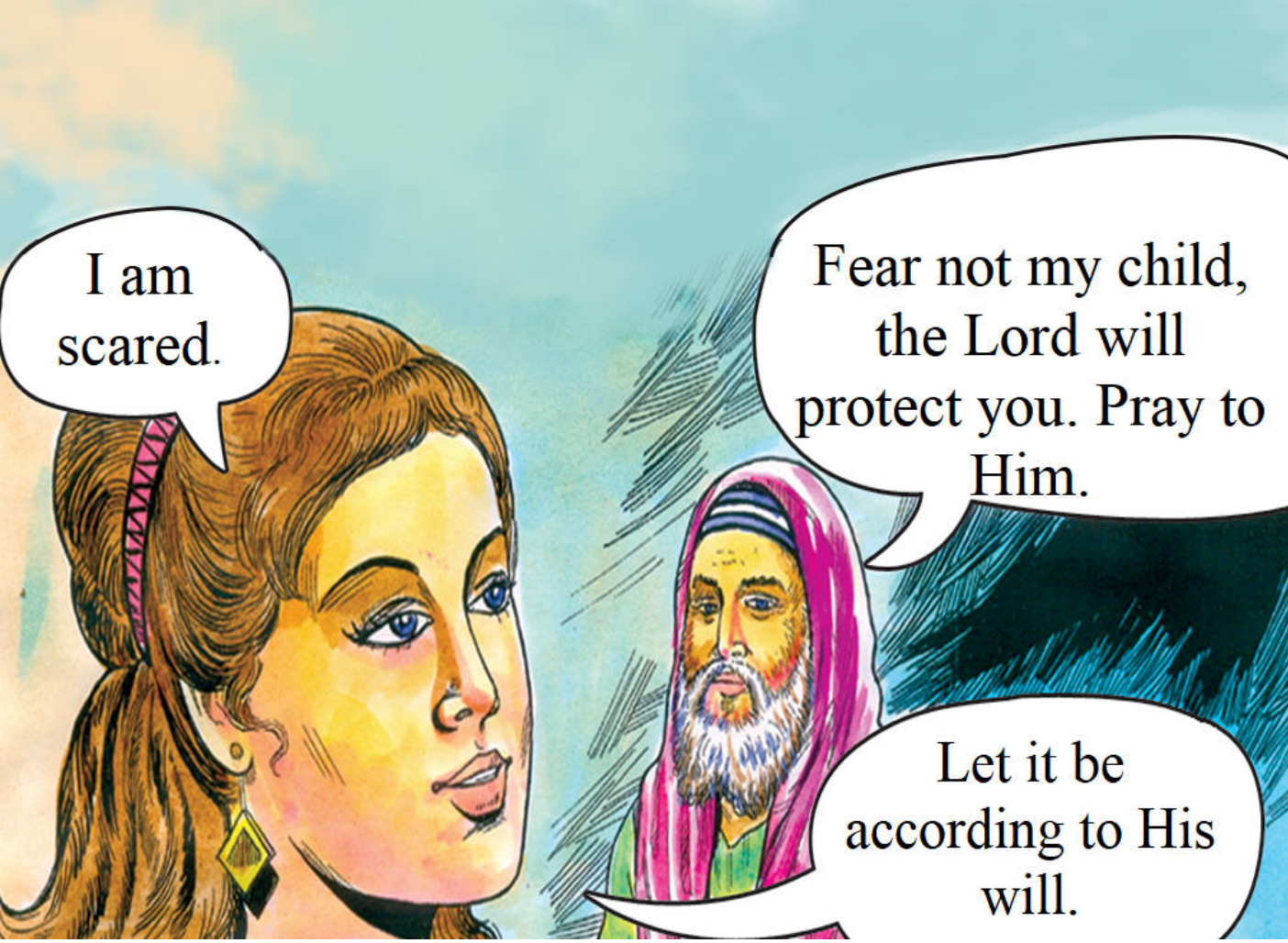
Esther, tomorrow the king's men will come to select the queen-to-be. You must go.

They are not bothered with race and religion.

Will the king accept a Jewish woman?



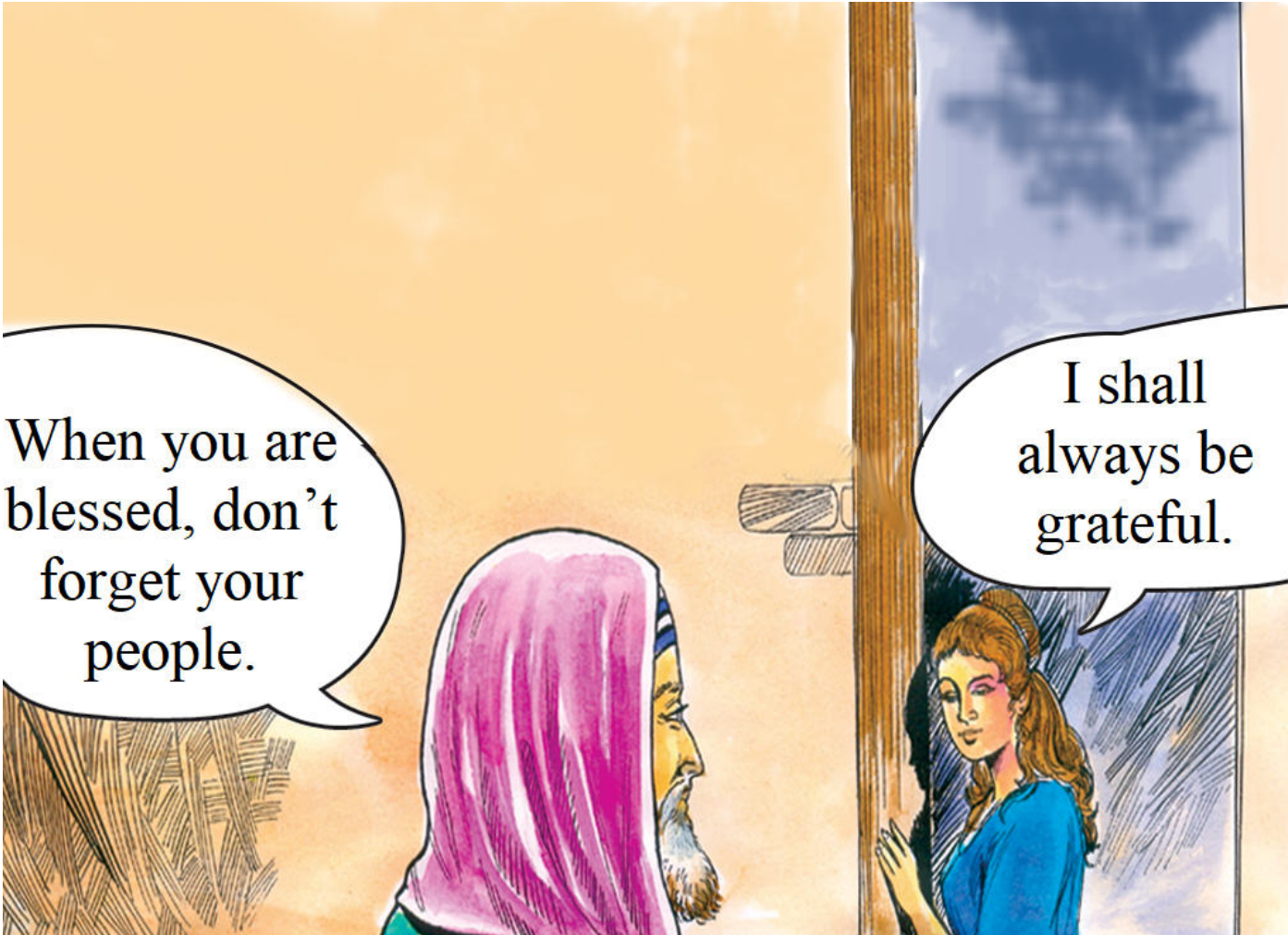




I am  
scared.

Fear not my child,  
the Lord will  
protect you. Pray to  
Him.

Let it be  
according to His  
will.



When you are  
blessed, don't  
forget your  
people.

I shall  
always be  
grateful.



Many beautiful girls were selected from various parts of the empire and brought to the Palace. Esther was among them.



For a year you must work on improving your beauty. You can have all the perfumes and ointments you want.







Don't hesitate  
to ask for  
anything you  
need.

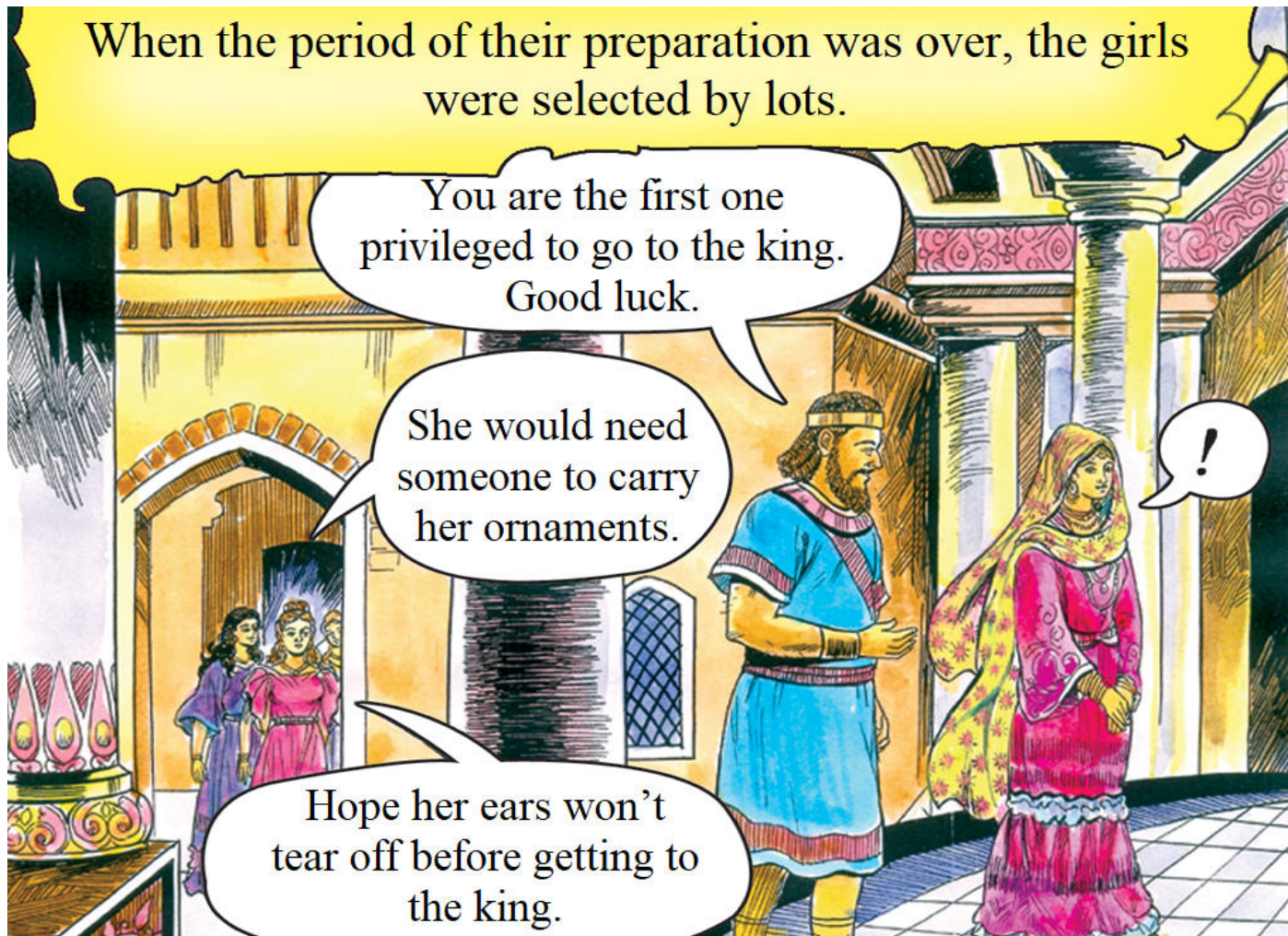
When the period of their preparation was over, the girls were selected by lots.

You are the first one privileged to go to the king.  
Good luck.

She would need someone to carry her ornaments.

Hope her ears won't tear off before getting to the king.

!





The next morning she returned.

Should we wait  
anymore?

What did the  
king say?

He said, he wants  
to see you tonight.



One by one many girls were taken to the king. But none of them was selected to be the queen. Finally Esther's turn came.

Master, tell me what dress I should wear and what ornaments I should put on.

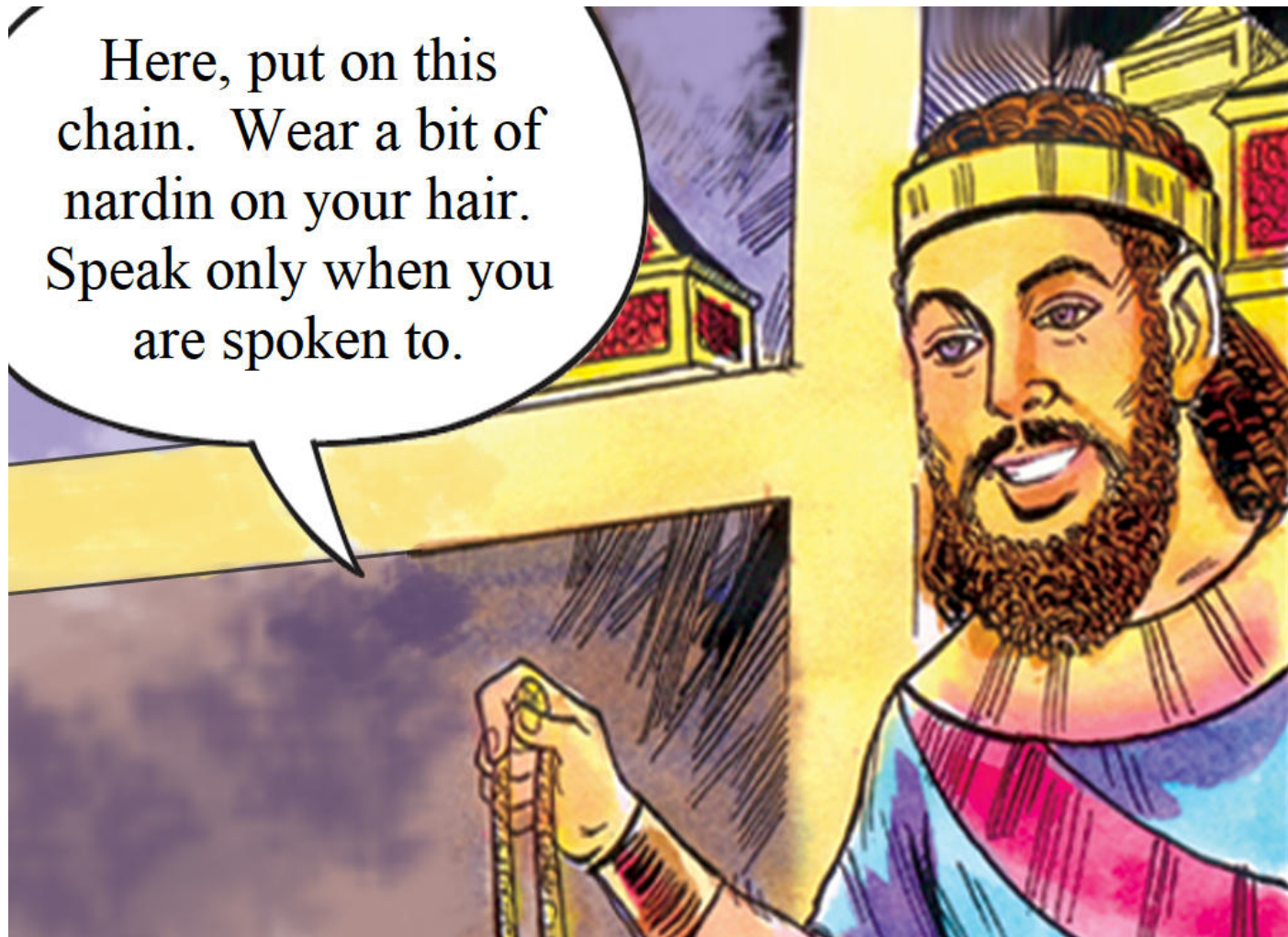
You are beautiful without any ornaments. The king will like you.

I am terribly afraid to go to the king.





Here, put on this chain. Wear a bit of nardin on your hair. Speak only when you are spoken to.



Fine don't be afraid. Go ahead. Don't forget me when you are selected.

I will always be grateful to you.





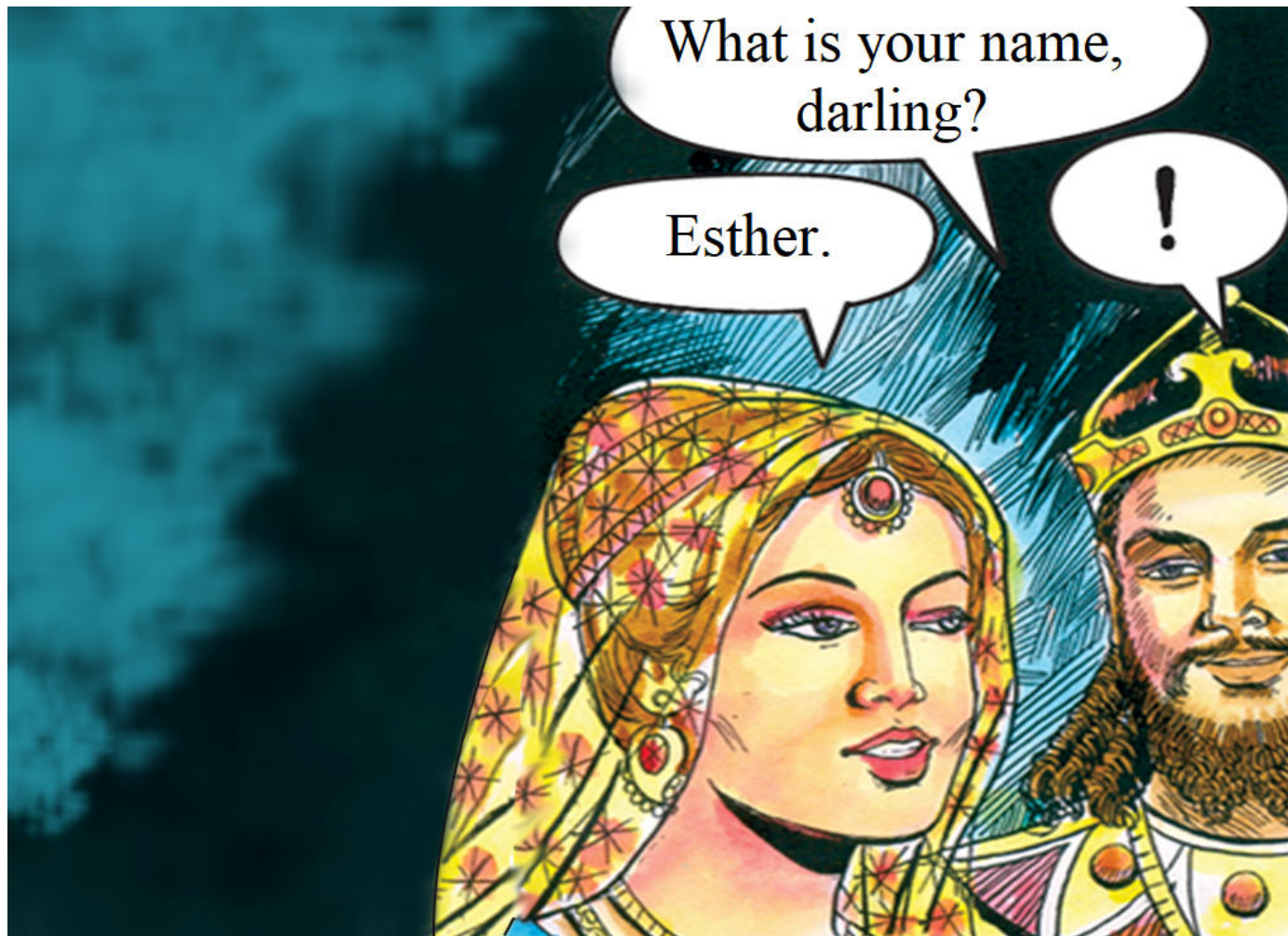
Esther in the Royal  
Chamber.



What is your name,  
darling?

Esther.

!





Esther, I like you. I  
accept you as my queen.

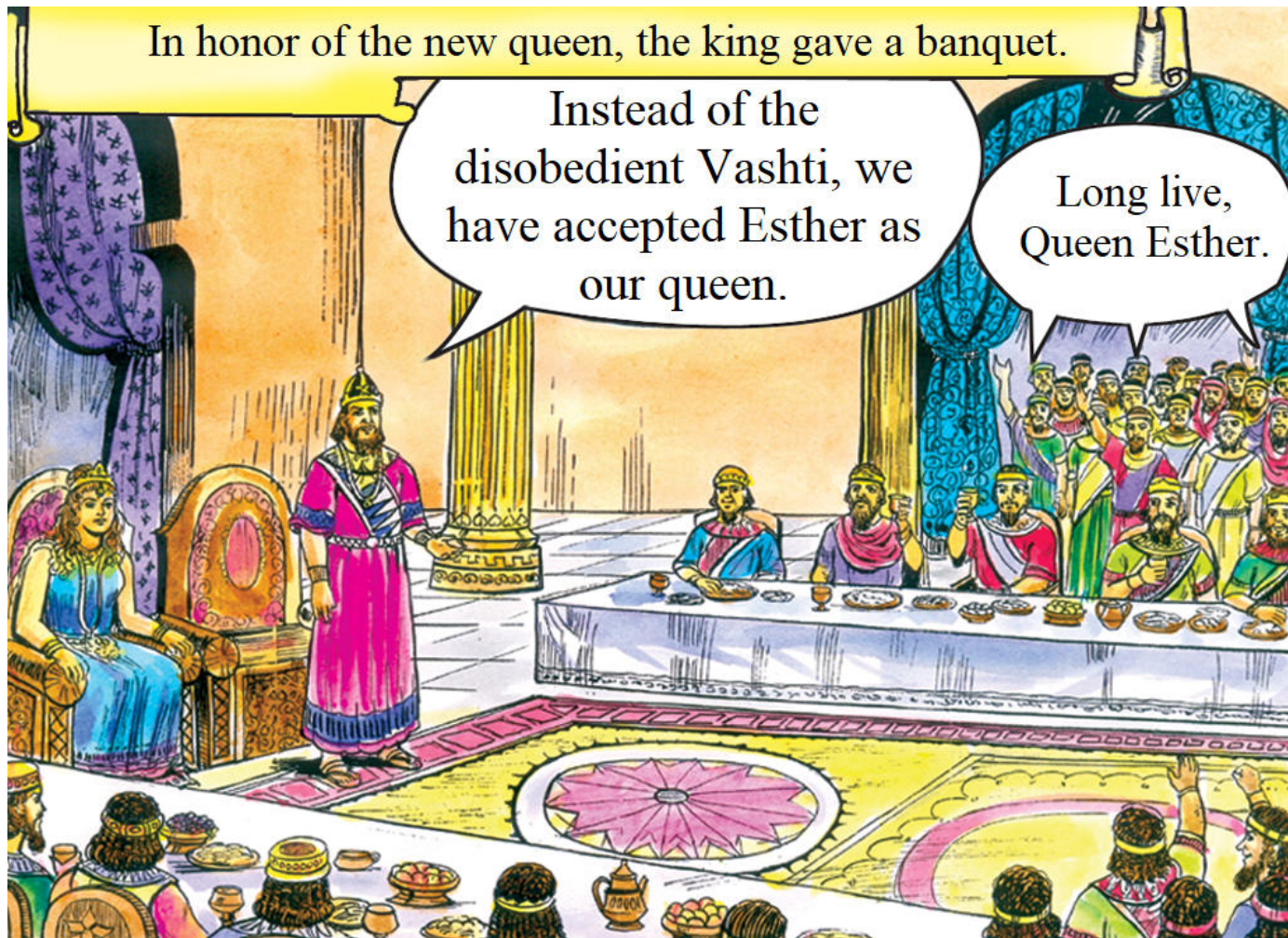




In honor of the new queen, the king gave a banquet.

Instead of the  
disobedient Vashti, we  
have accepted Esther as  
our queen.

Long live,  
Queen Esther.



As a sign of our joy, we  
proclaim to all the provinces of  
the empire a 50% reduction of  
taxes for one year.





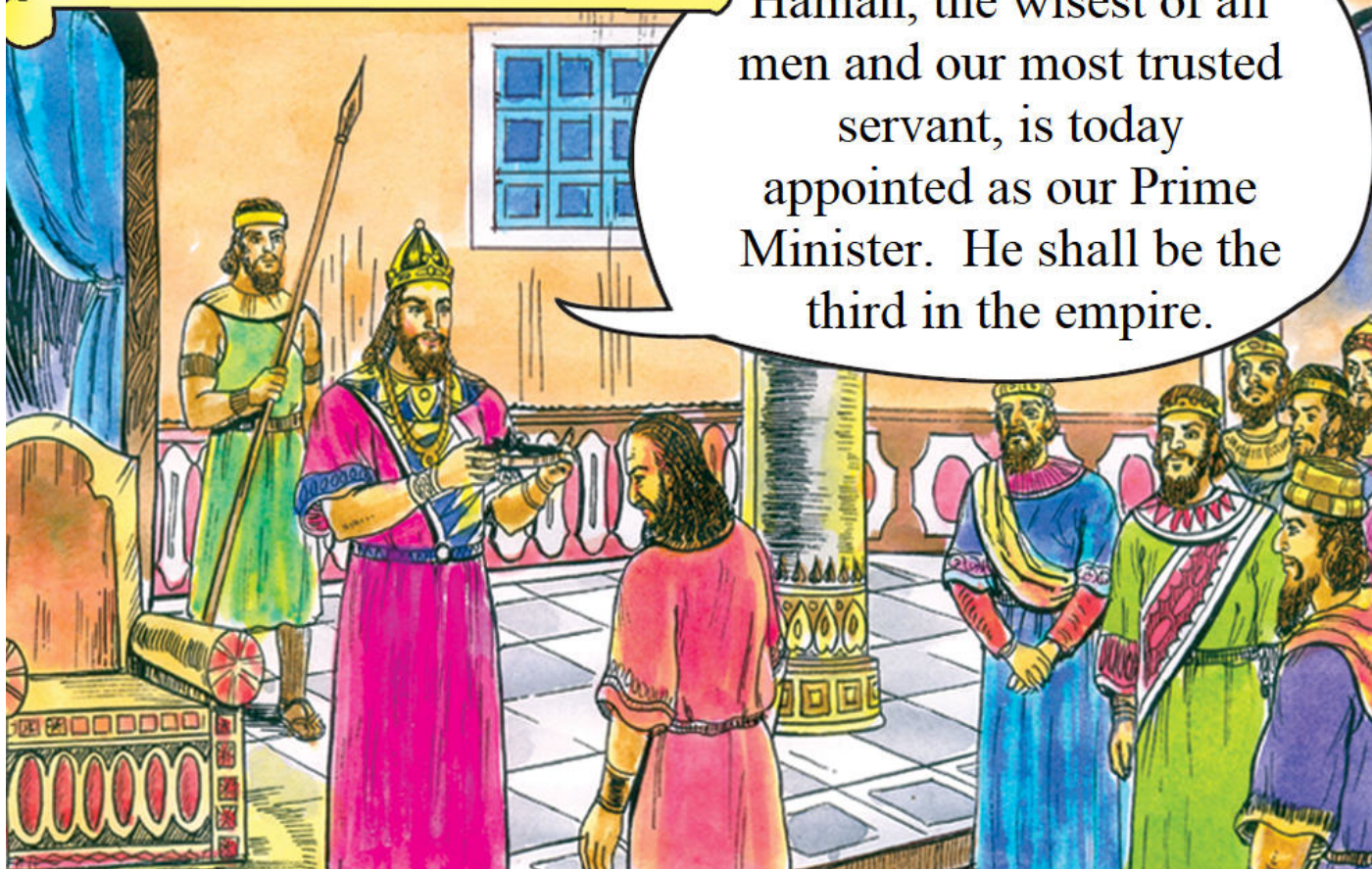
All the nobles and officers will be  
given special gifts and Honors.  
To the inhabitants of Susa, a  
banquet for seven days.





On the last day of the feast, when the gifts were distributed.

Haman, the wisest of all men and our most trusted servant, is today appointed as our Prime Minister. He shall be the third in the empire.

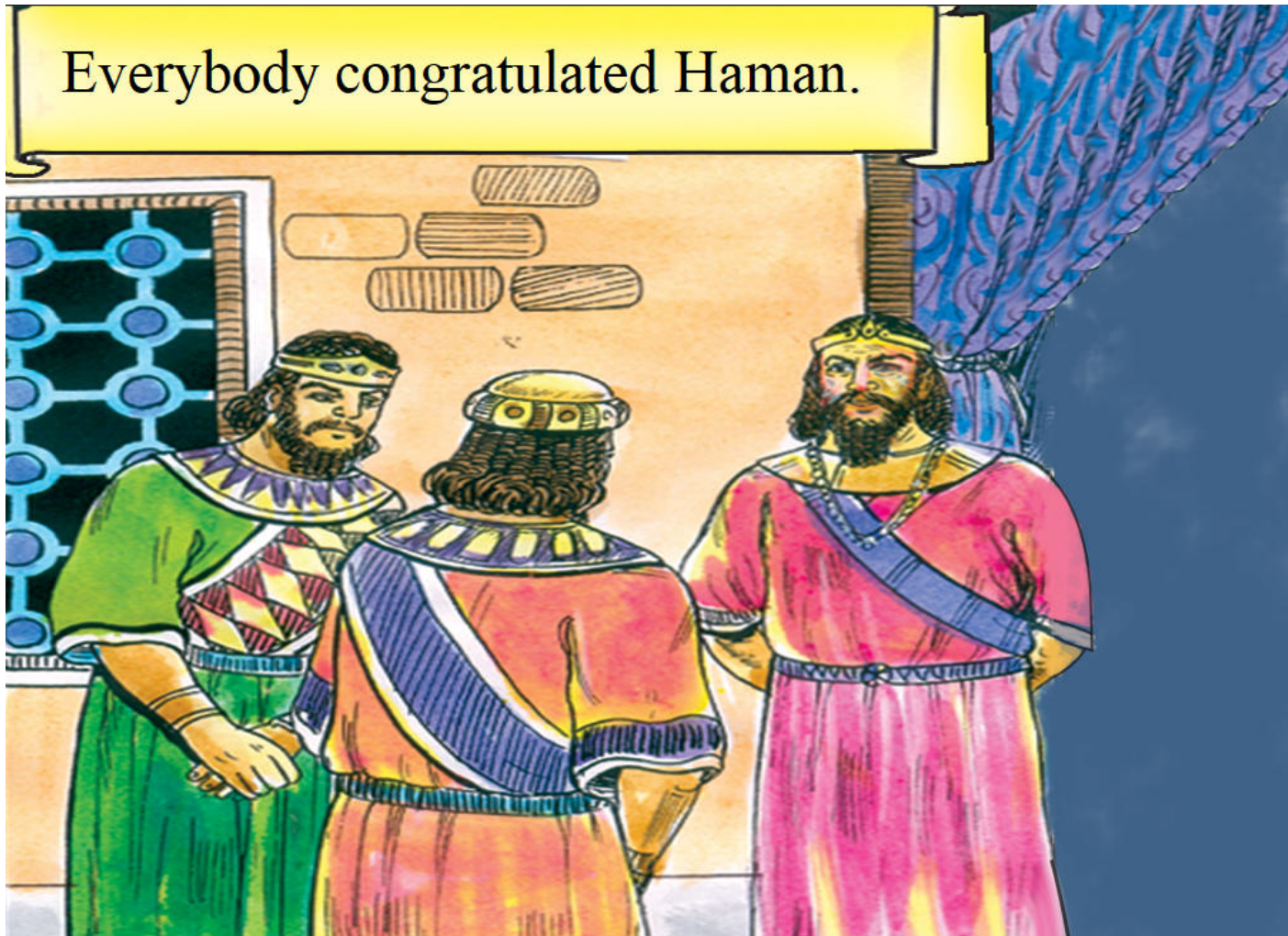


All must honor and obey  
Haman as they do me.

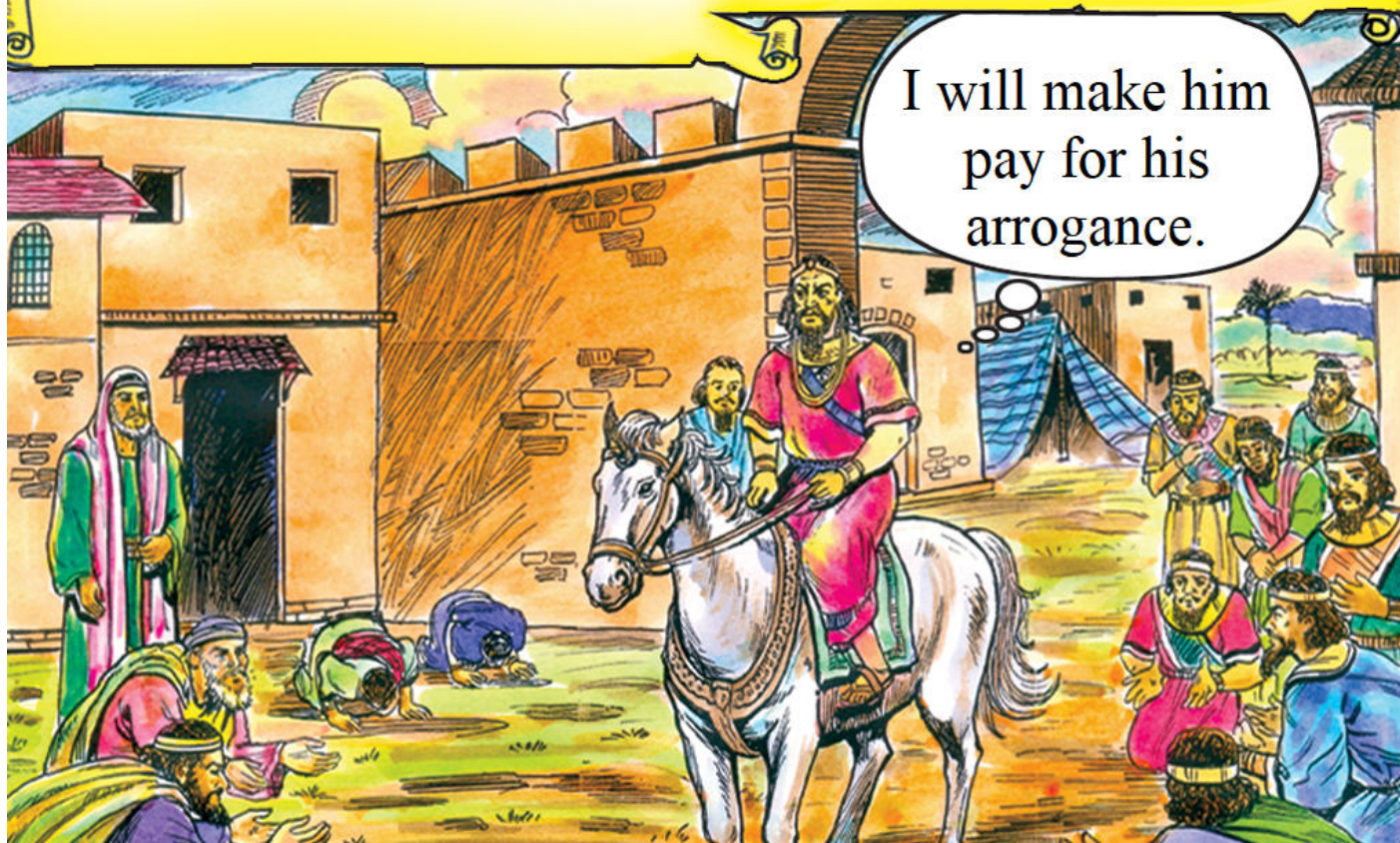




Everybody congratulated Haman.



As years passed Haman's pride and arrogance grew with His power. All, except Mordecai bowed to him when he passed.





When Haman was gone.

How come you  
alone don't bow  
to him?

Don't you know that  
the king has bestowed  
all kinds of powers on  
him?



I shall bend my  
knees before no one  
but the Almighty  
God.



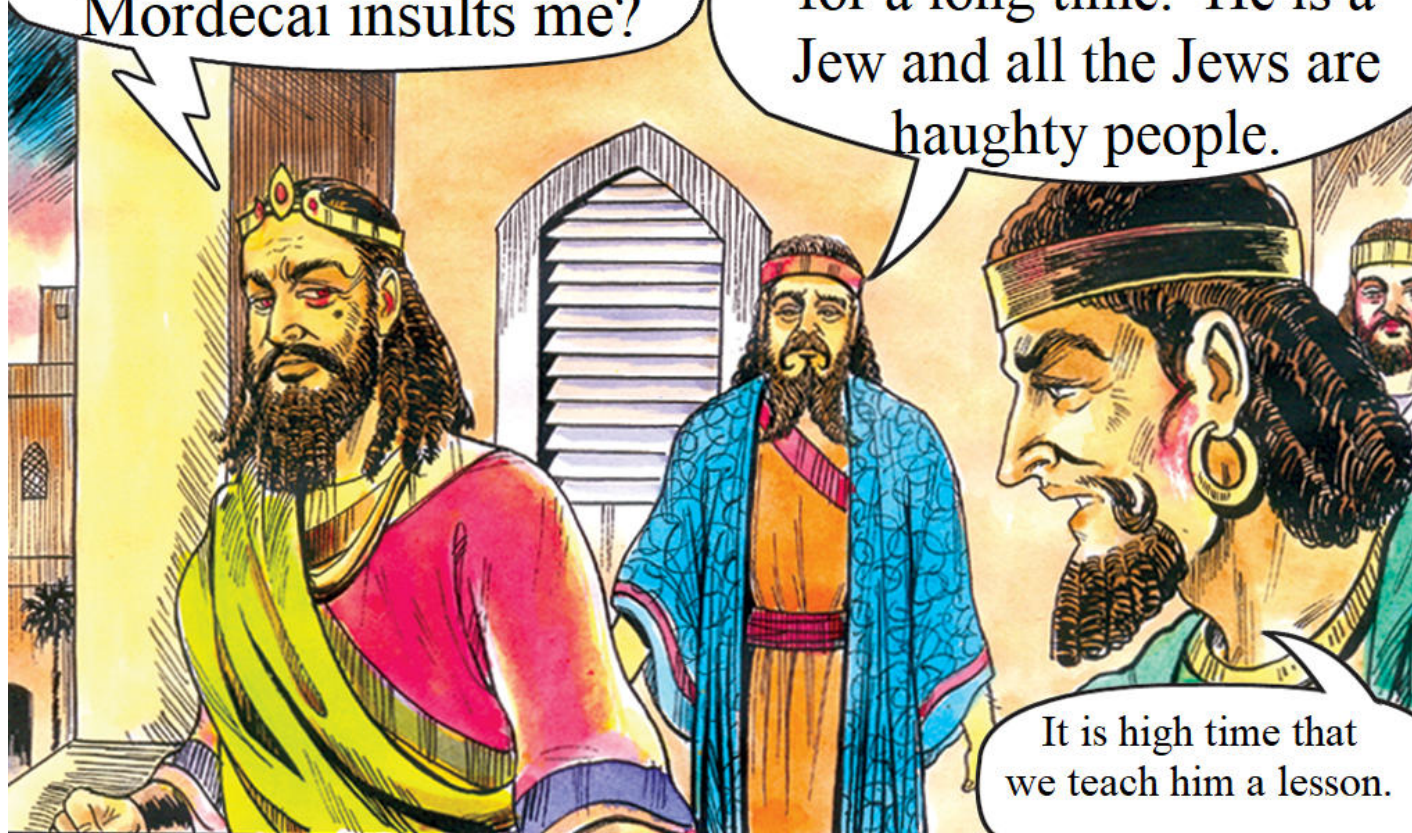


Haman with his friends at home.

Did you notice how that Mordecai insults me?

We have been watching it for a long time. He is a Jew and all the Jews are haughty people.

It is high time that we teach him a lesson.



You have the power. Deal with him in such a way that others may see and learn to respect you.

That's not enough. We must destroy him and his race. It is they who thwart all our plans.



He smells out our conspiracies and informs the queen, and she in turn the king.

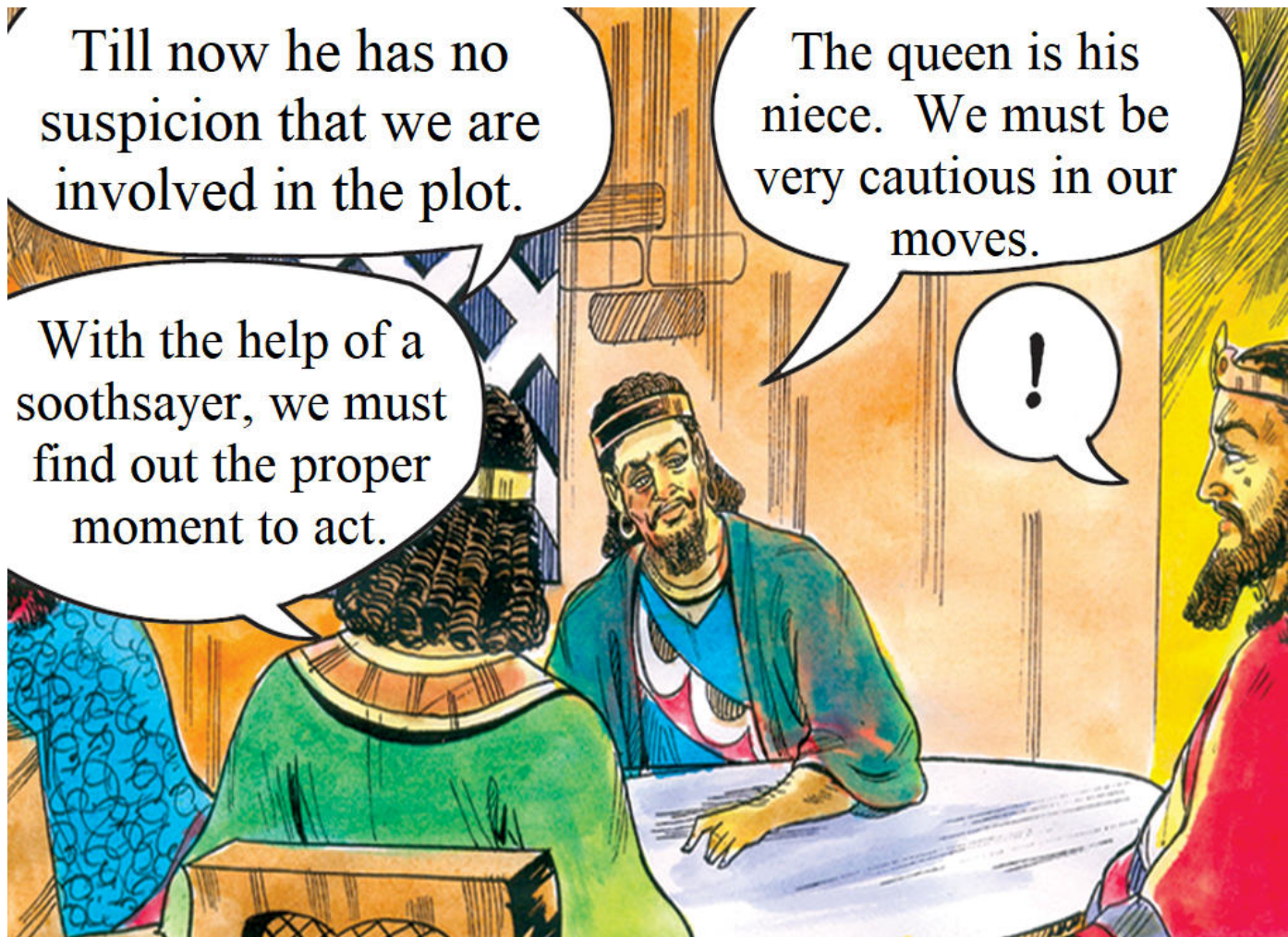


Till now he has no suspicion that we are involved in the plot.

With the help of a soothsayer, we must find out the proper moment to act.

The queen is his niece. We must be very cautious in our moves.

!





!!?

The position of the stars  
is not favorable now.

Any attempt will  
fail. We must wait.

?



For a whole year they kept on casting  
lots every day, finally:

!!!

Stars are in  
favorable  
positions.  
Best time to  
act.

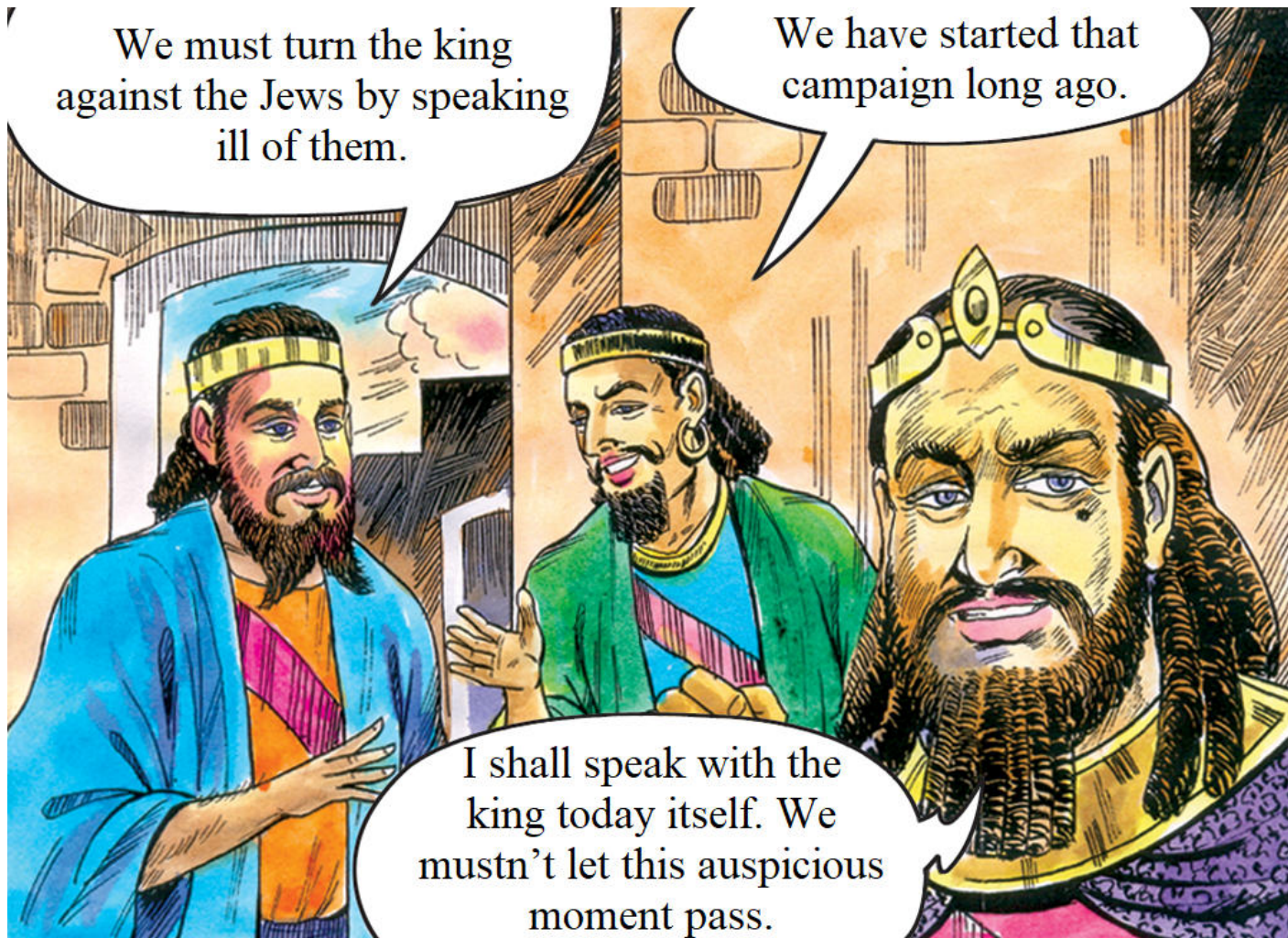




We must turn the king  
against the Jews by speaking  
ill of them.

We have started that  
campaign long ago.

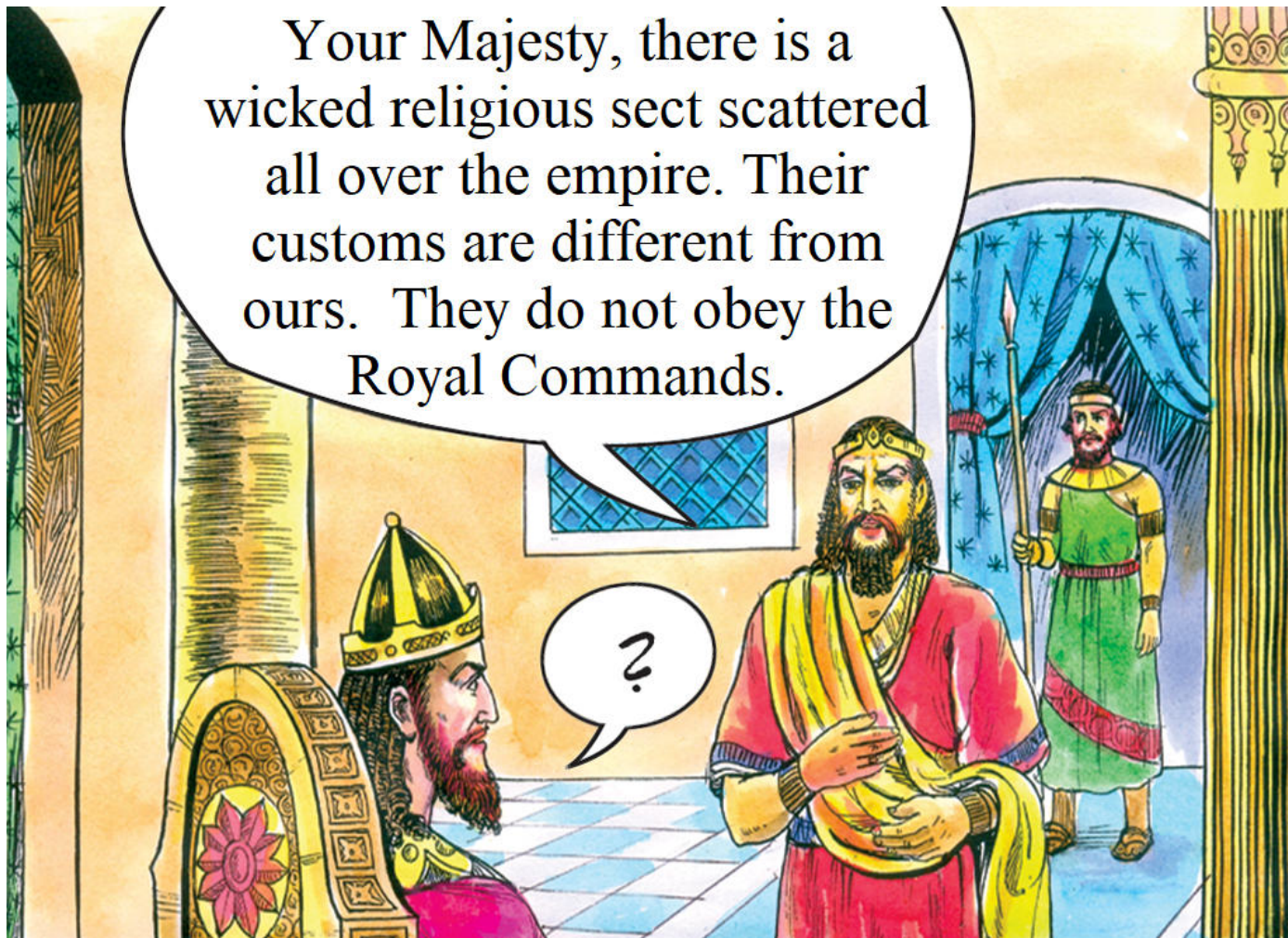
I shall speak with the  
king today itself. We  
mustn't let this auspicious  
moment pass.





Your Majesty, there is a wicked religious sect scattered all over the empire. Their customs are different from ours. They do not obey the Royal Commands.

?

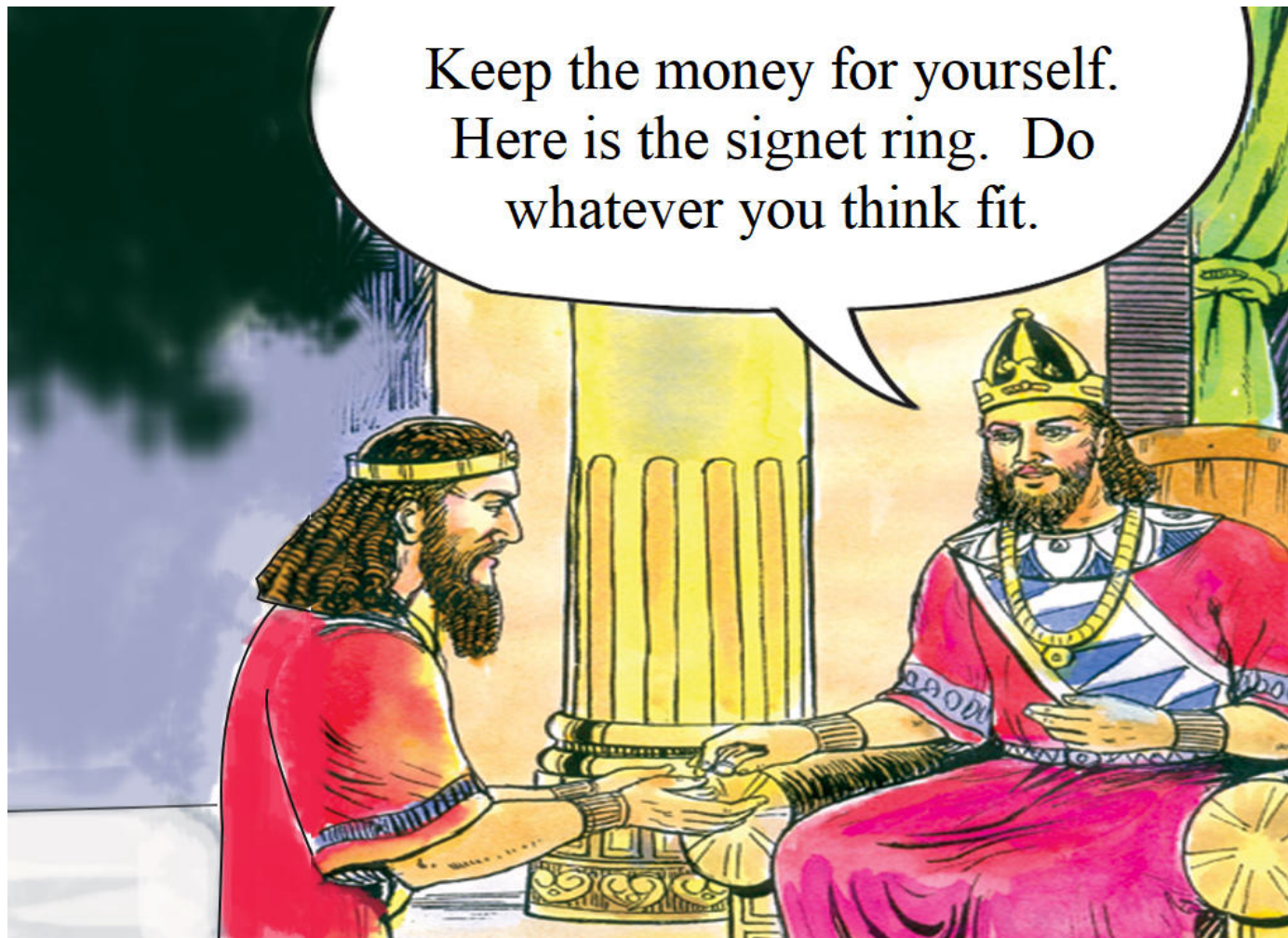


They are a dangerous people.  
They even conspired against your  
Majesty. If you would allow me to  
destroy them, I shall pay ten  
thousand Talents of silver to the  
royal treasury.



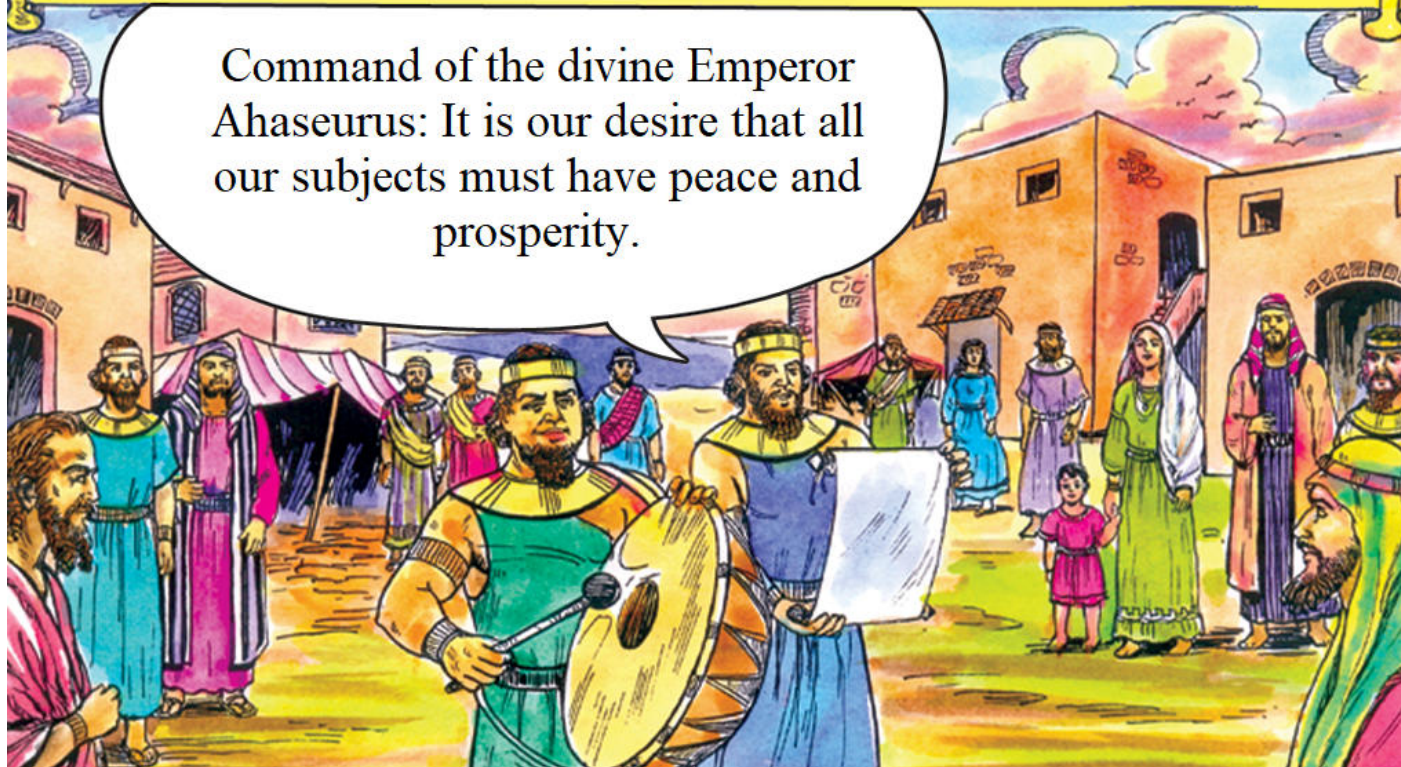


Keep the money for yourself.  
Here is the signet ring. Do  
whatever you think fit.

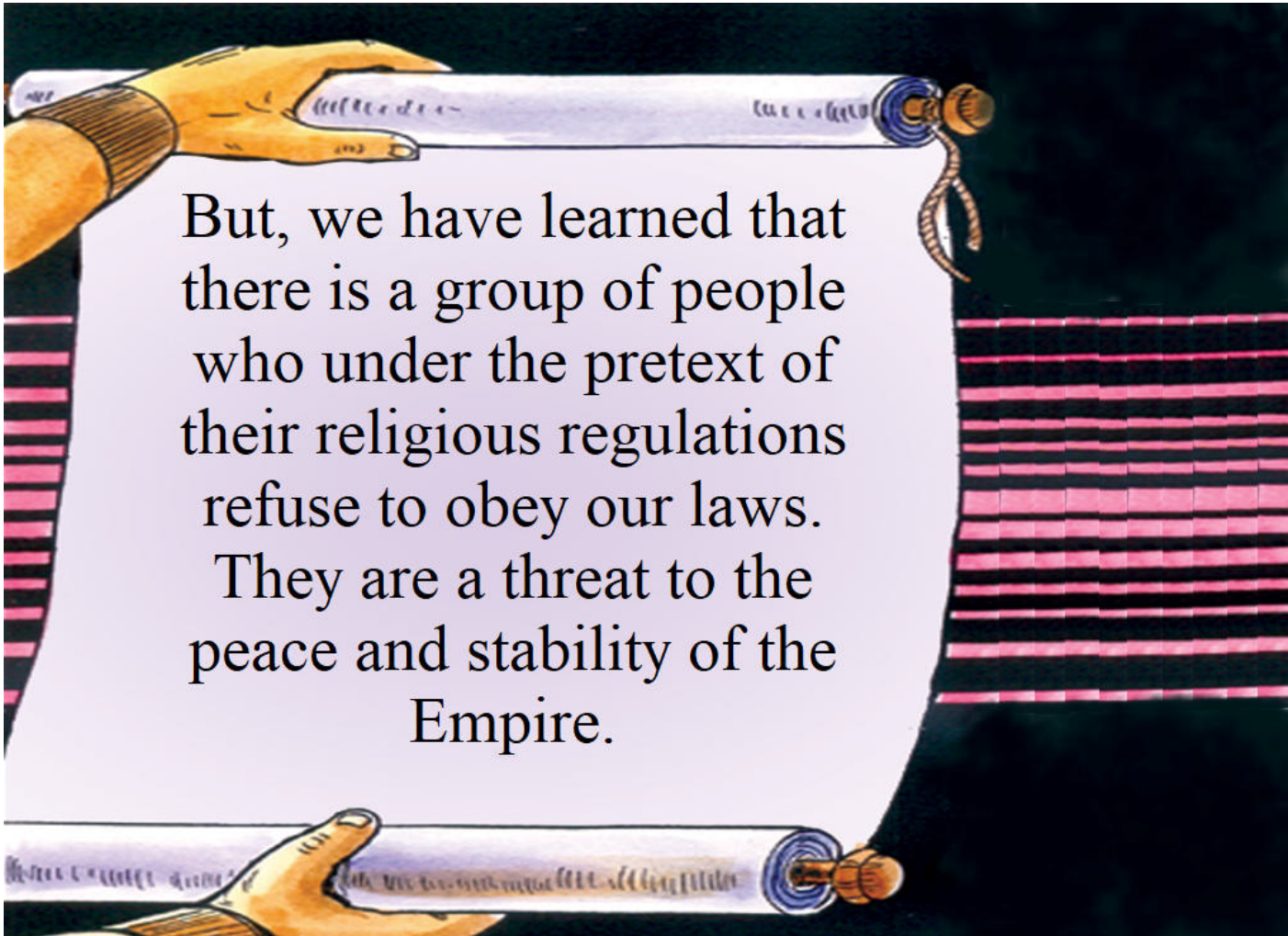


The day to kill all the Jews was decided by casting lots on the thirteenth day of the first month of the thirteenth year of Ahasuerus reign, a royal proclamation was made all over the Persian Empire.

Command of the divine Emperor Ahaseurus: It is our desire that all our subjects must have peace and prosperity.



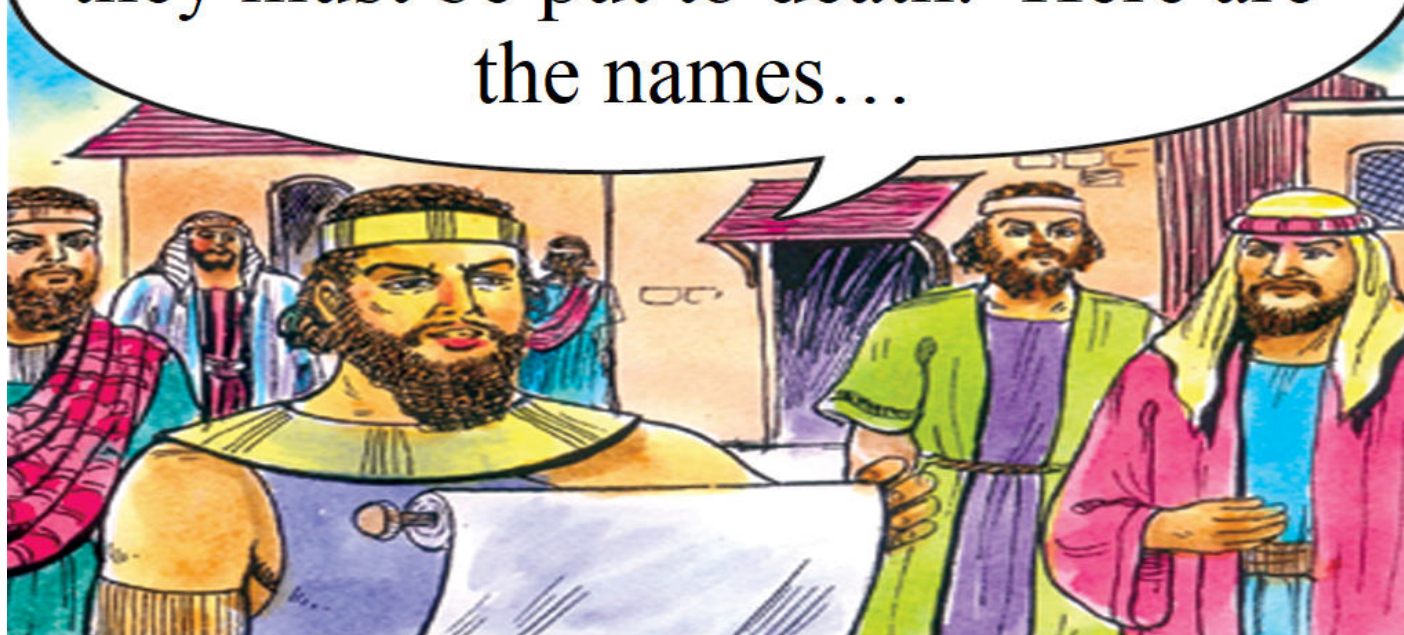


An illustration of a hand holding a scroll. The hand is yellow with a brown sleeve. The scroll is white with blue text. The background is dark blue with horizontal pink and white stripes. The text on the scroll is: "But, we have learned that there is a group of people who under the pretext of their religious regulations refuse to obey our laws. They are a threat to the peace and stability of the Empire."

But, we have learned that  
there is a group of people  
who under the pretext of  
their religious regulations  
refuse to obey our laws.

They are a threat to the  
peace and stability of the  
Empire.

Our wise and devout minister Haman has prepared a list of all these wicked people. On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of 12<sup>th</sup> month they must be put to death. Here are the names...





In deep sorrow, the Jews put on sack clothes and ashes and cried to the Lord. Seeing Mordecai standing at the palace gate in sack clothes, Esther sent her servant to him.

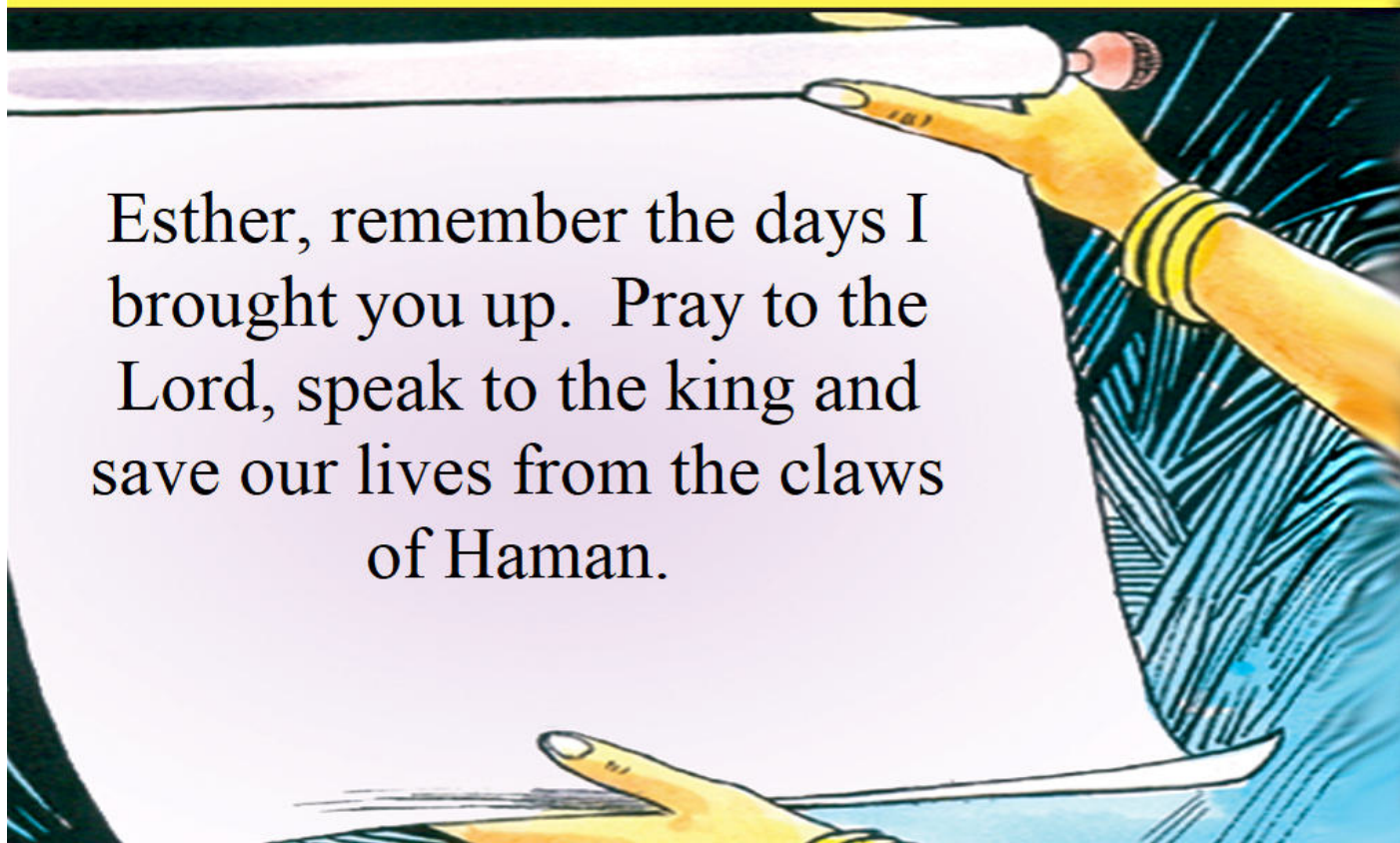
Queen Esther sends me. What happened to you? Please remove the sack cloth and wear this silk garment.

This is not the time to wear silk. Our lives are in danger. Please give this scroll to the Queen.



At the bottom of the copy of the edict of Haman,  
Mordecai had written:

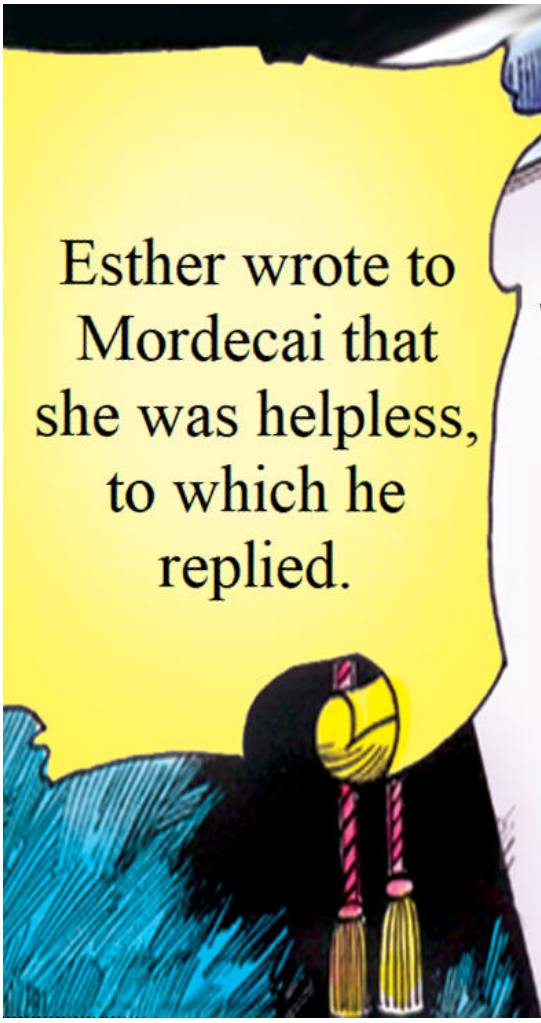
Esther, remember the days I  
brought you up. Pray to the  
Lord, speak to the king and  
save our lives from the claws  
of Haman.





What shall I do? Approaching the king without being summoned may cause my death, if the king didn't accept me. It has been a month since he called me.





Esther wrote to  
Mordecai that  
she was helpless,  
to which he  
replied.

Esther, do not presume  
that your life is safer  
than that of the other  
Jews. If you do not  
save us from this  
disaster, we may get  
help from somewhere  
else. But you will perish,  
wasn't it for your people  
that the Lord made you  
Queen.

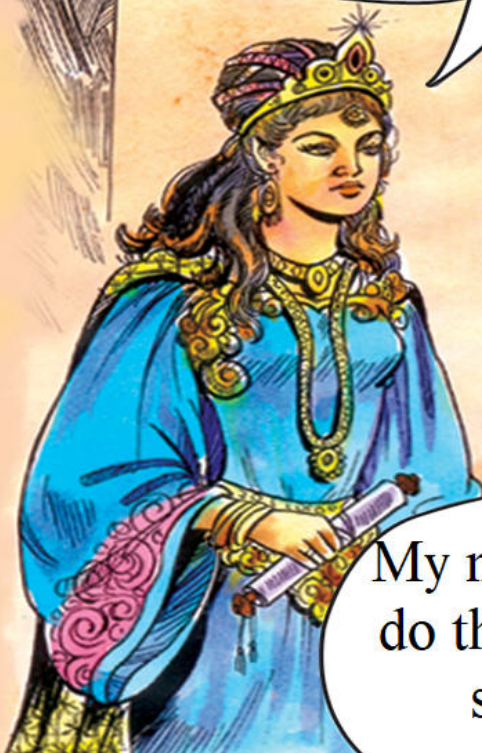


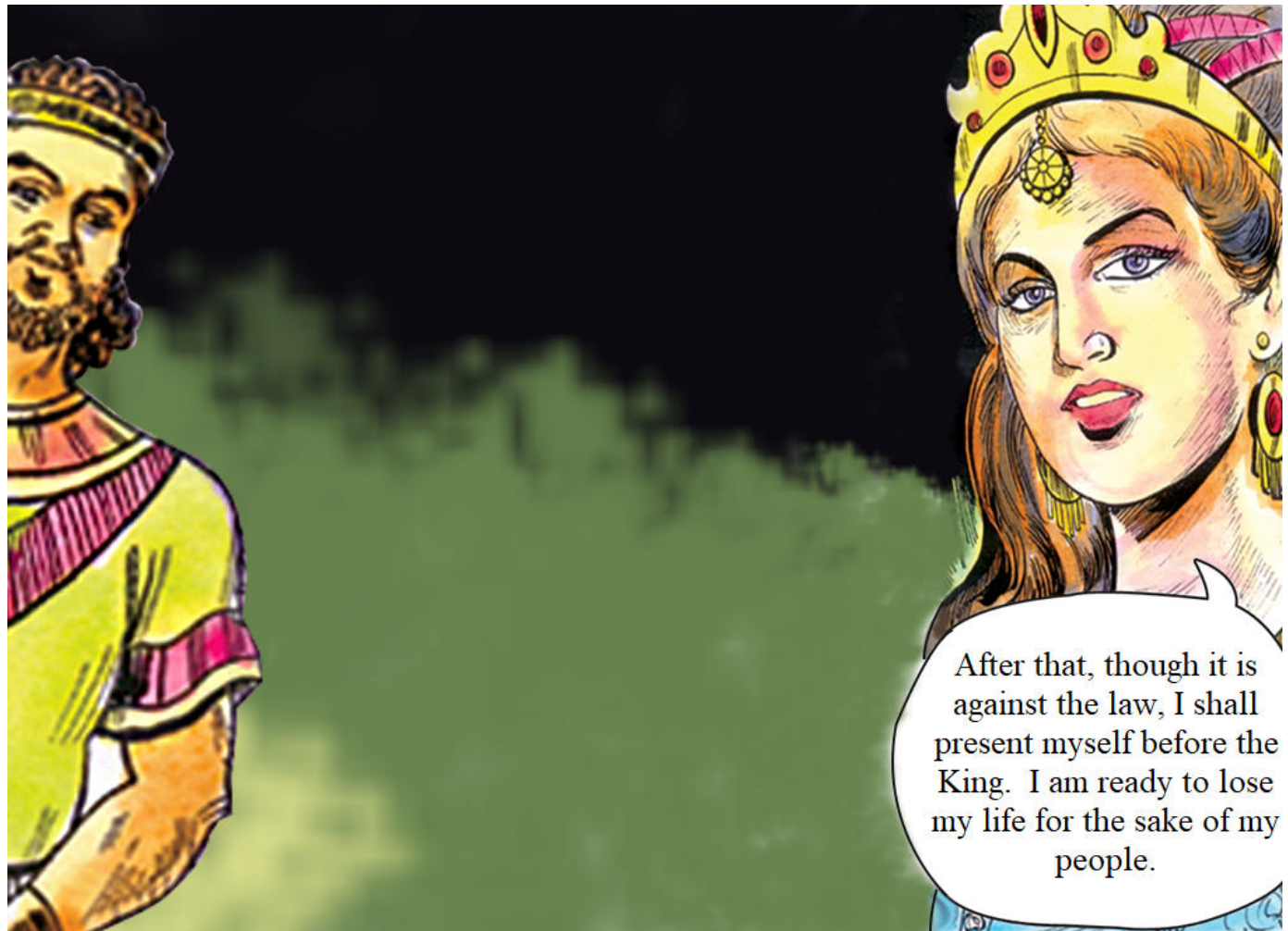
After reading  
the letter.

Go and tell Mordecai to ask  
all the Jews in Susa to fast  
and pray for three days.

!

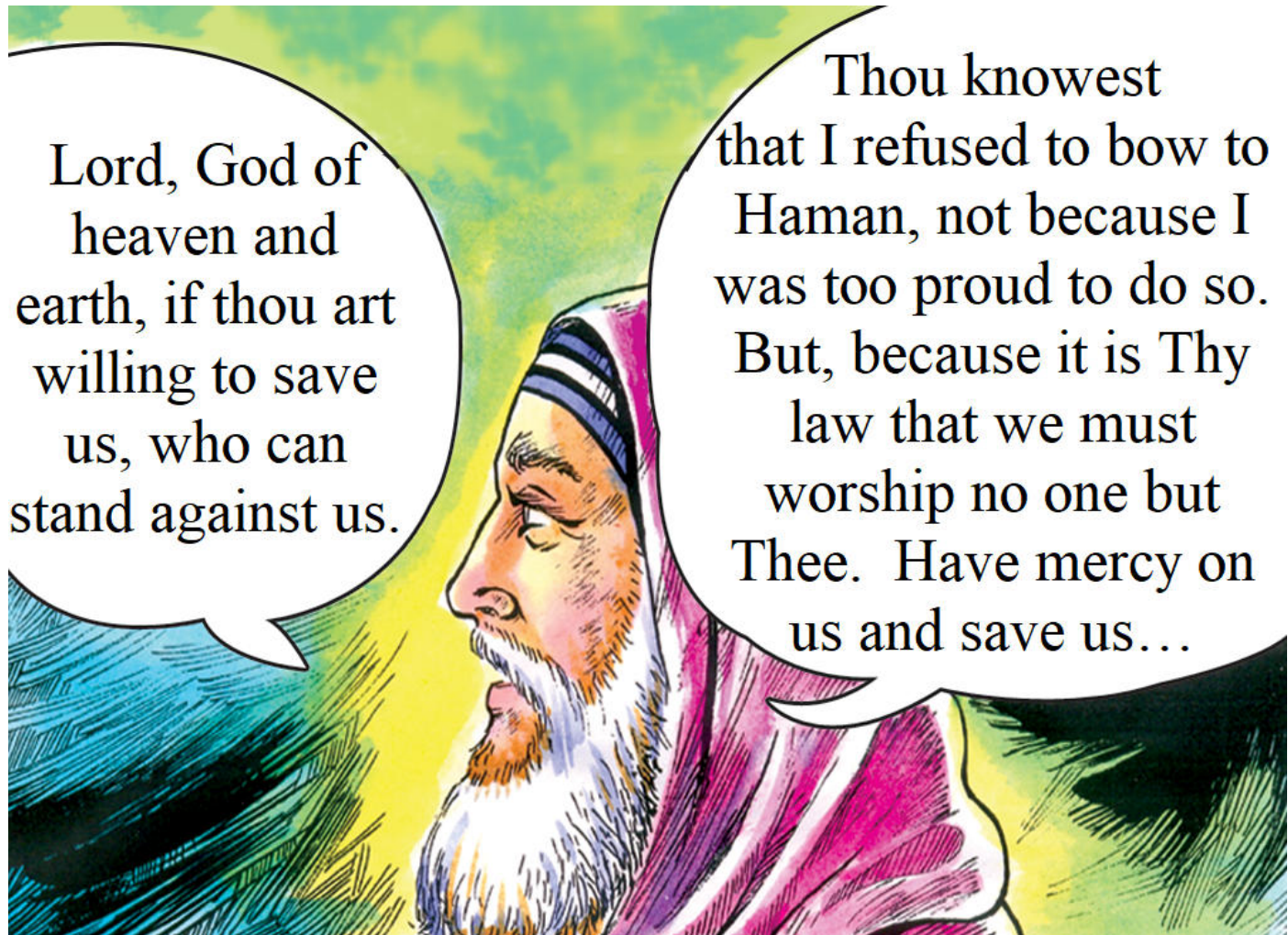
My maids and I shall  
do the same wearing  
sack clothes.





After that, though it is against the law, I shall present myself before the King. I am ready to lose my life for the sake of my people.

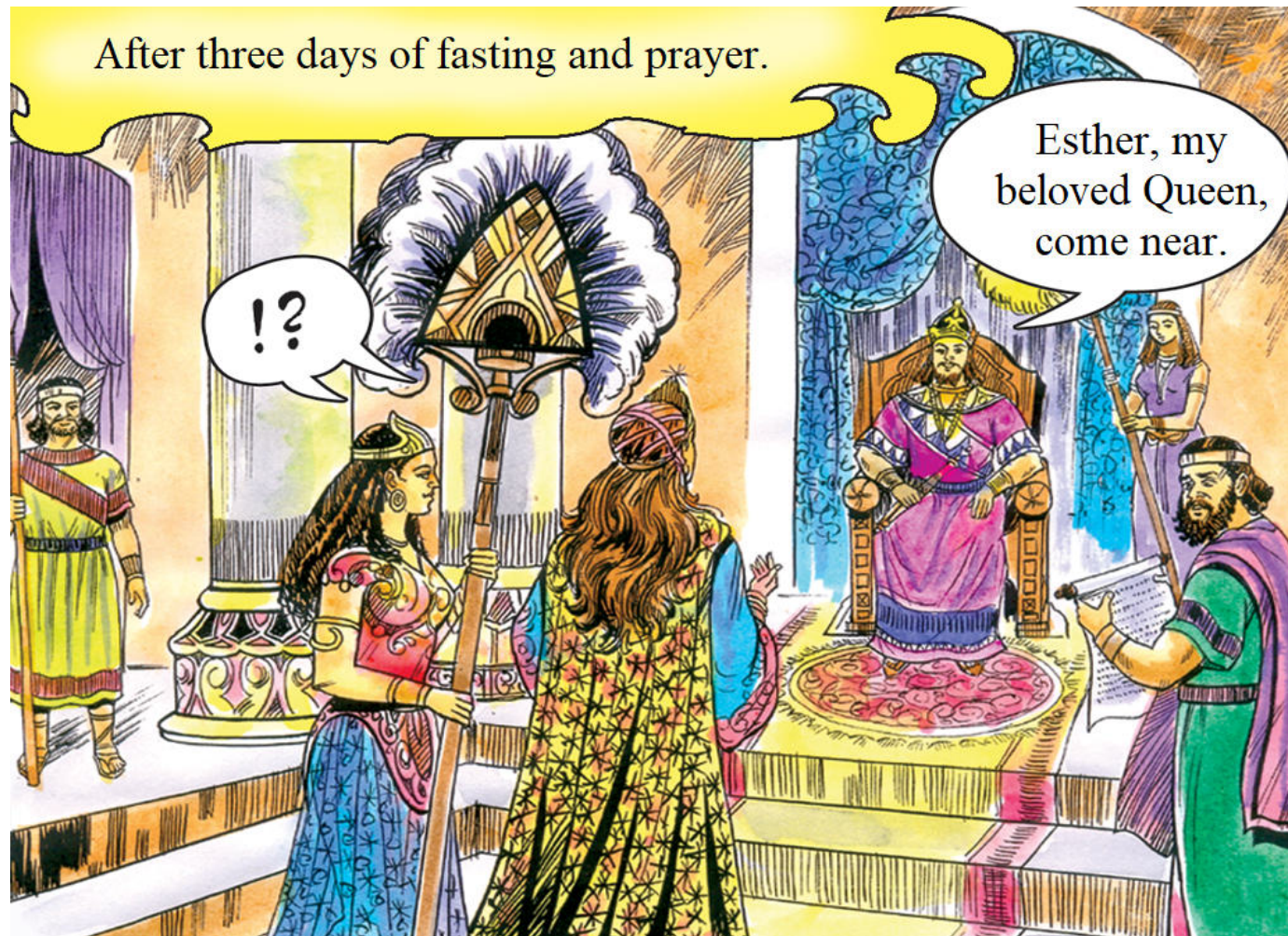




Lord, God of  
heaven and  
earth, if thou art  
willing to save  
us, who can  
stand against us.

Thou knowest  
that I refused to bow to  
Haman, not because I  
was too proud to do so.  
But, because it is Thy  
law that we must  
worship no one but  
Thee. Have mercy on  
us and save us...

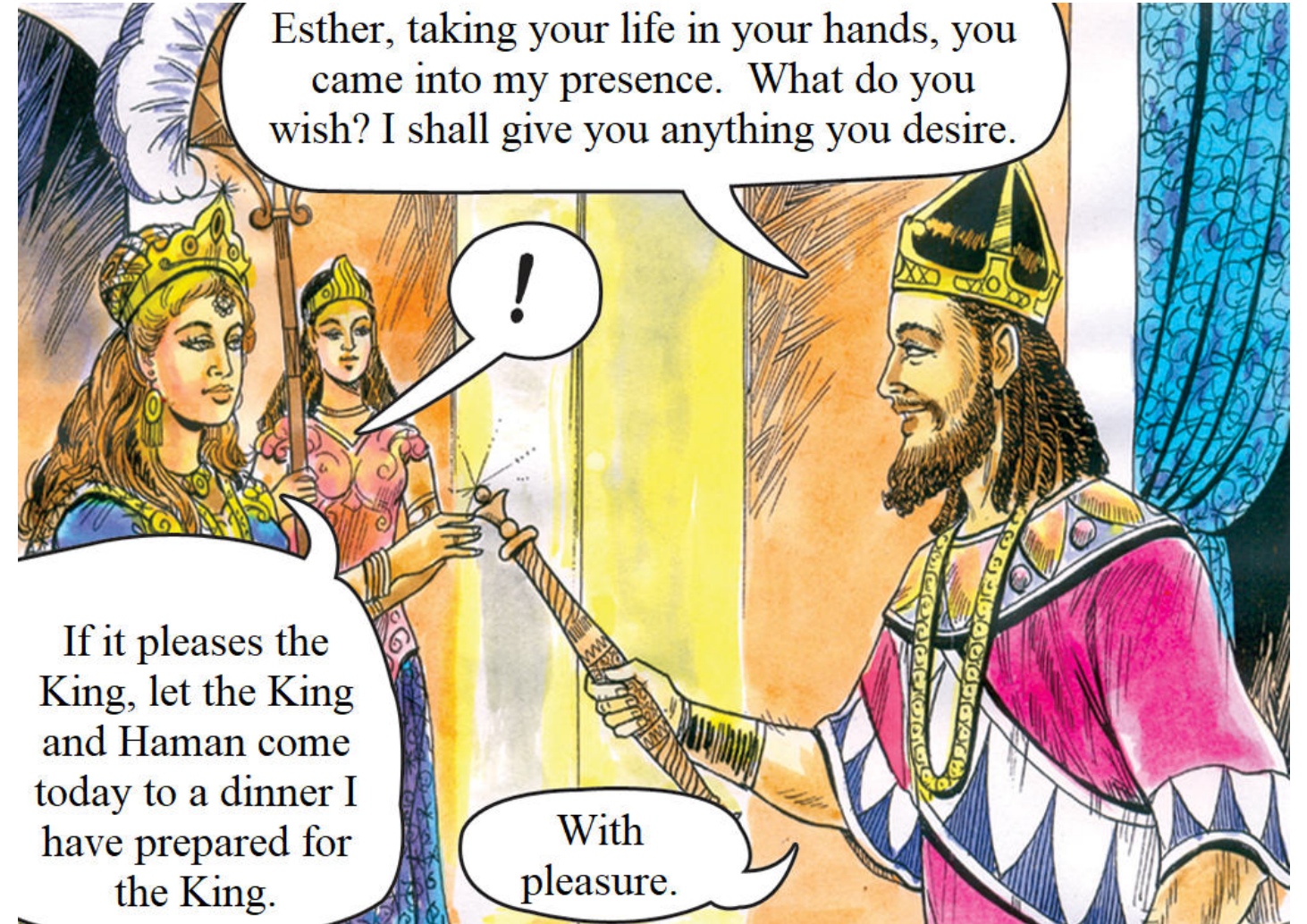
After three days of fasting and prayer.



Esther, my  
beloved Queen,  
come near.

!?





Esther, taking your life in your hands, you came into my presence. What do you wish? I shall give you anything you desire.

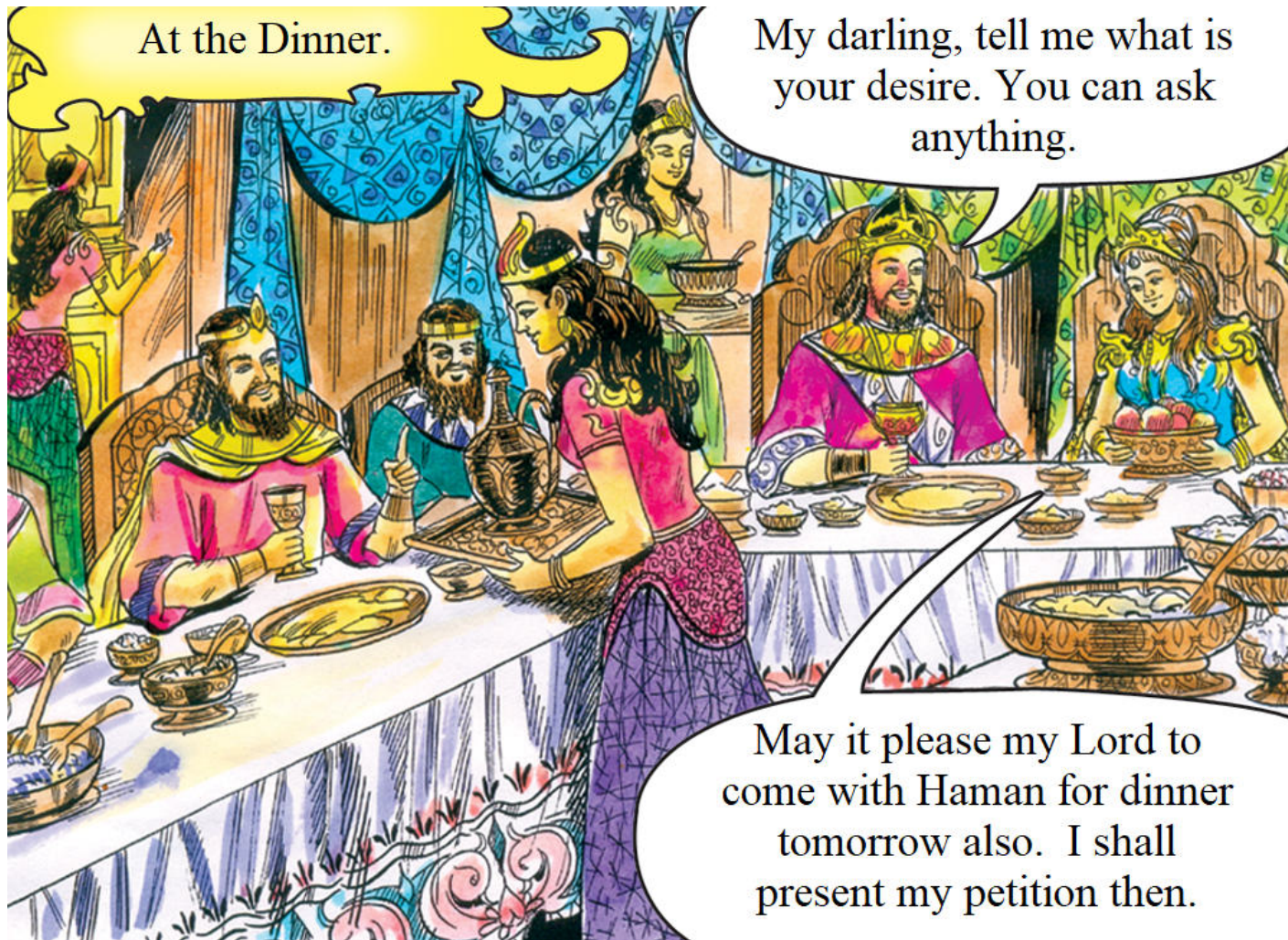
If it pleases the King, let the King and Haman come today to a dinner I have prepared for the King.

With pleasure.



At the Dinner.

My darling, tell me what is your desire. You can ask anything.



May it please my Lord to come with Haman for dinner tomorrow also. I shall present my petition then.



After dinner Haman left well pleased with himself. But he was very angry when Mordecai didn't bow to him on the way. Upon reaching home, he called a meeting of the family and friends.

How was the Queen's banquet? Were there many guests.

Only I was invited with the king. She has invited me again for tomorrow. The queen seems to have a great respect for me.

How can she help it? You are the second man in the empire.



But that Mordecai, he  
didn't even get up when  
he saw me. I can't bear  
him anymore.

We shall make a  
gallows 50 feet  
high and hang him  
on it tomorrow.



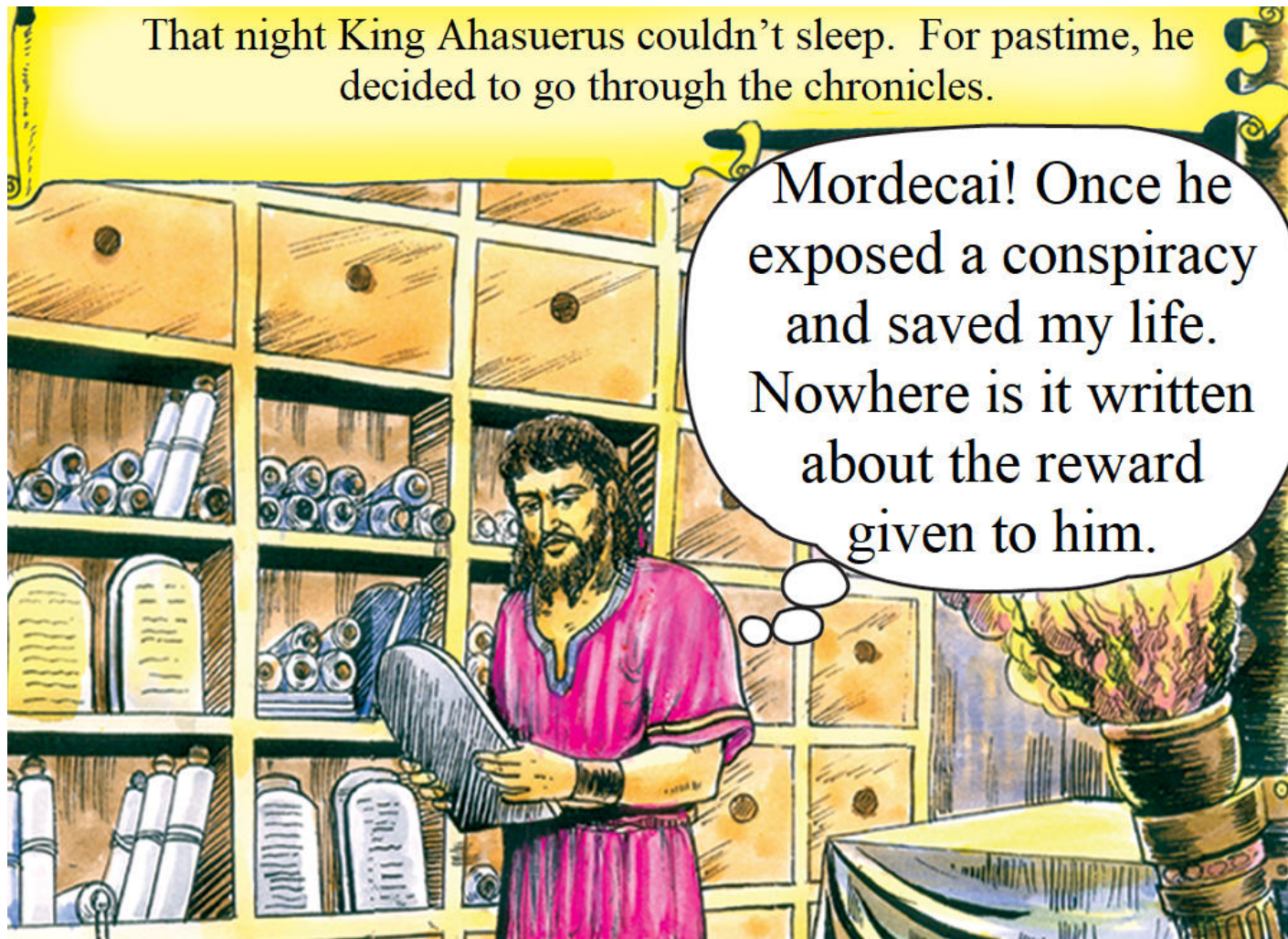


Good idea. I shall  
tell the king  
immediately.



That night King Ahasuerus couldn't sleep. For pastime, he decided to go through the chronicles.

Mordecai! Once he exposed a conspiracy and saved my life. Nowhere is it written about the reward given to him.

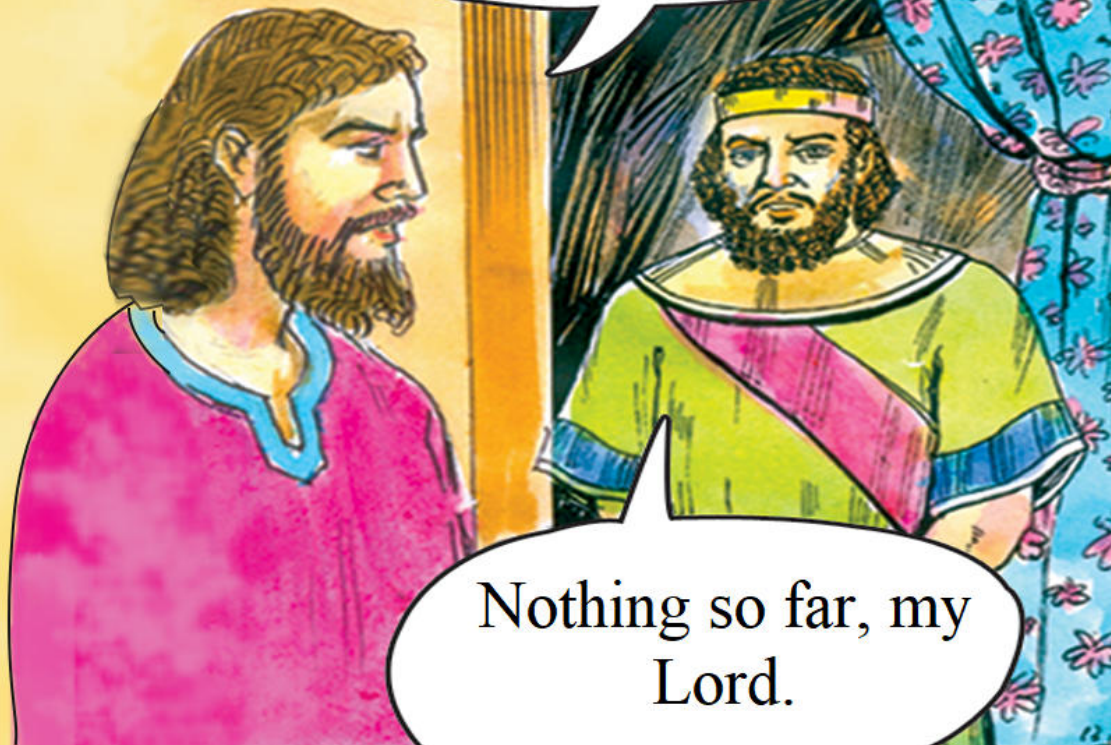




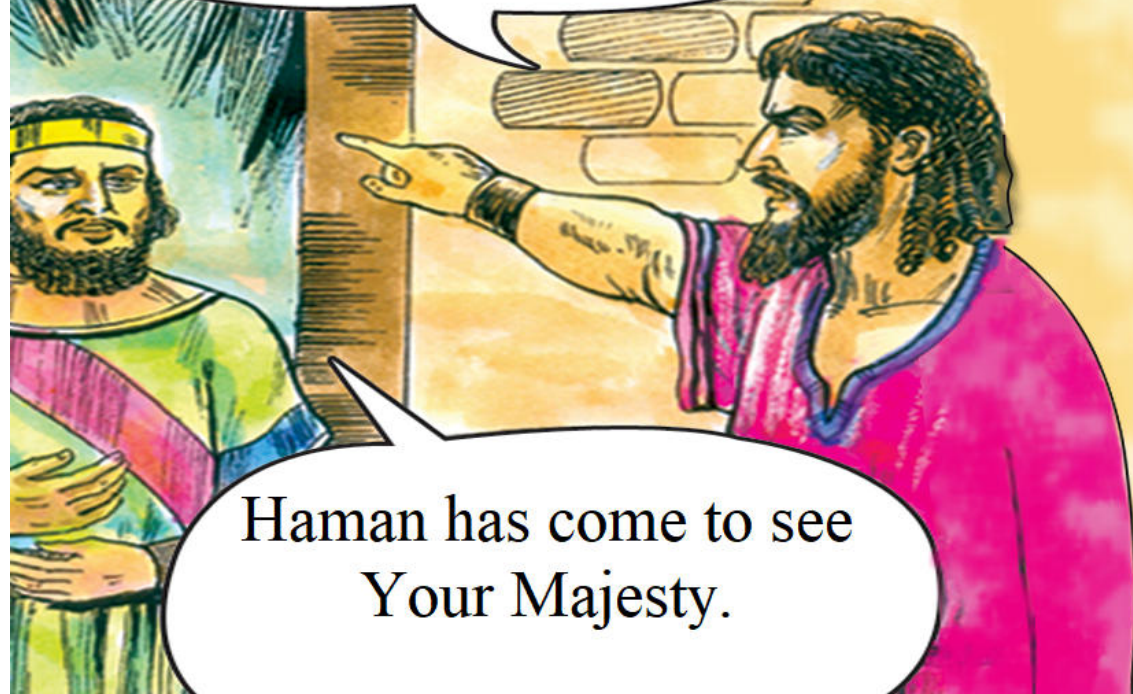
The King called the  
guard.

What present did we  
give to Mordecai for  
saving my life?

Nothing so far, my  
Lord.



What? Even after ten years  
we haven't rewarded him for  
such a great service? Who is  
outside?



Haman has come to see  
Your Majesty.



Haman, I am glad that you came. What shall we offer for a person the king wishes to honor?

It must be me. Who else deserve to be honored by the king?



Dress him in purple and let him ride on the King's horse through the city. Have the noblest prince of the empire walk before him saying: ...





Thus shall it be done to  
the man whom the king  
delights to honor?

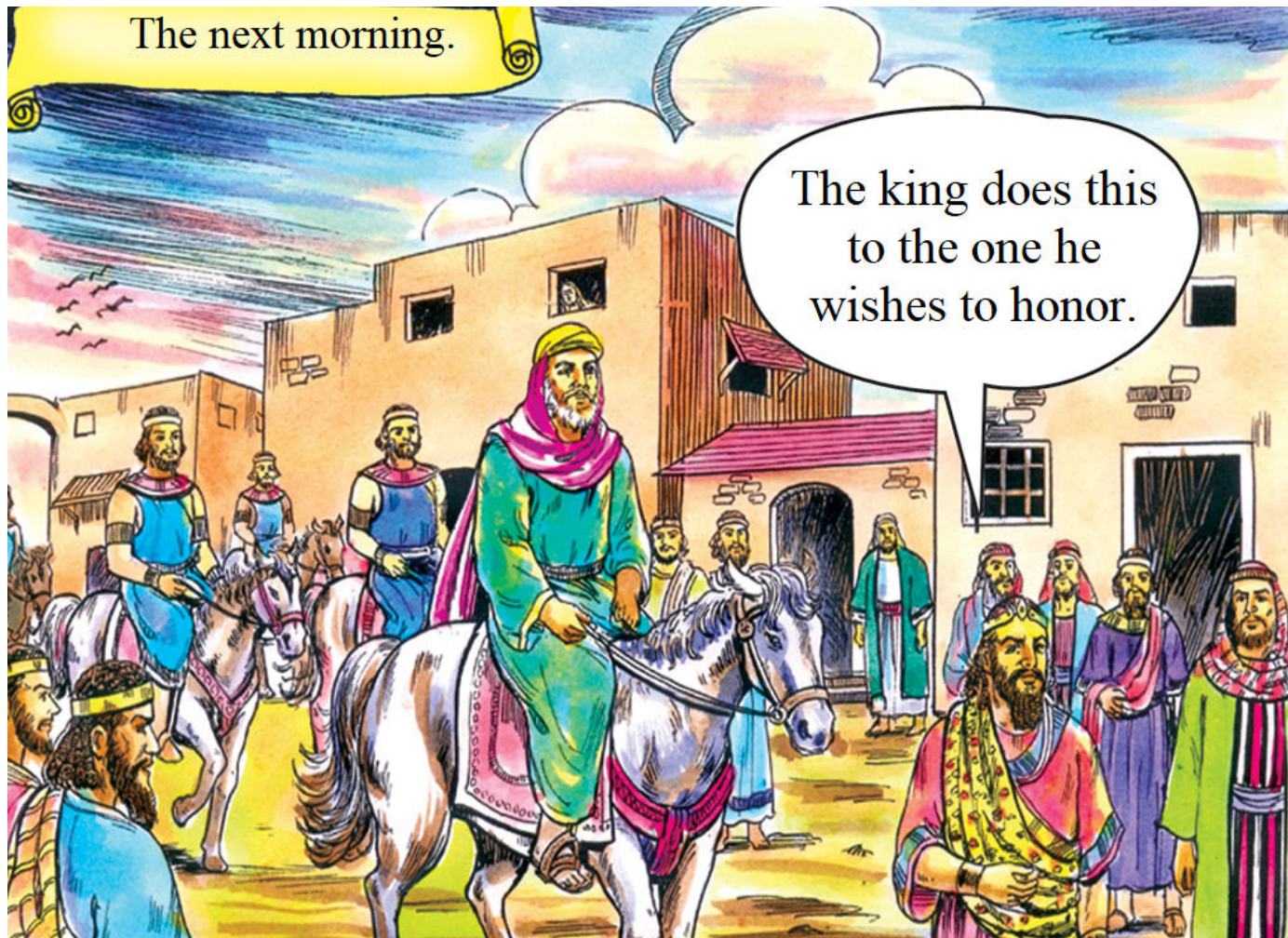
Very good you do  
thus to Mordecai  
tomorrow.

W.



The next morning.

The king does this  
to the one he  
wishes to honor.





Haman went home embarrassed. When it was time, the guards escorted him to the Queen's dinner.

Esther, what is your wish? I shall give you even half of the empire.

If it pleases your majesty, save my life.

What?



I belong to the people marked for annihilation. I would not have complained even if we were sold as slaves. All the Jews in Persia, including Mordecai whom you honored today are to be killed by the Royal edict.





Who dared to do  
this? Who is that  
wicked man?

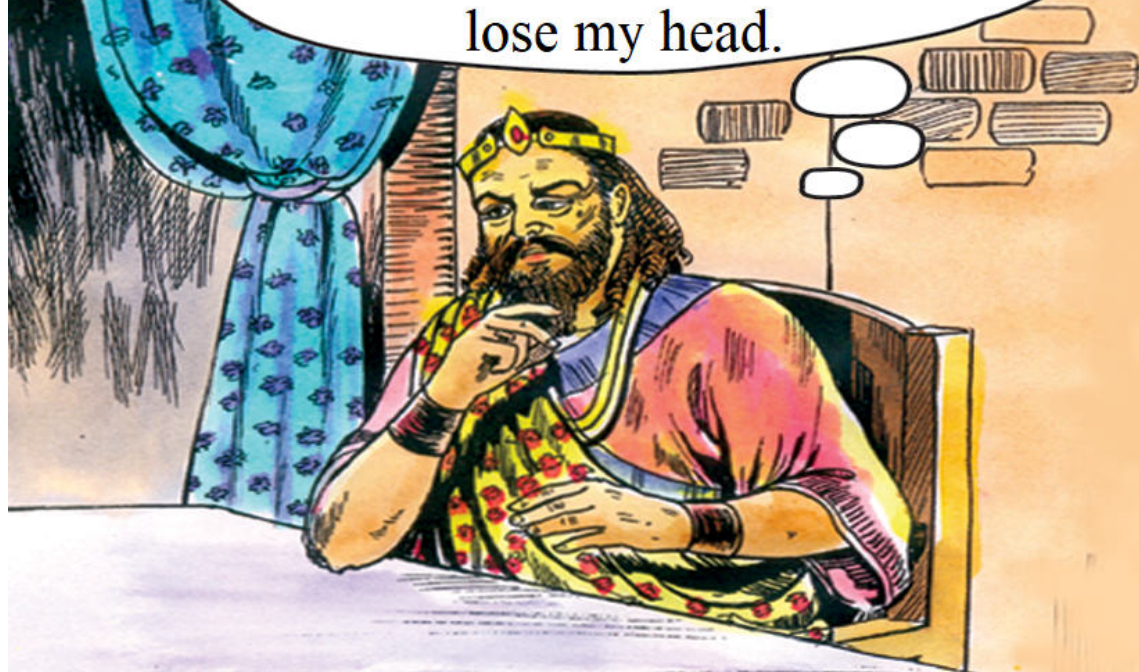
That Haman  
sitting here.

??!!



The king in great hurry stopped the dinner and walked out.

I am doomed. Now if he comes to know of the conspiracies also, I surely will lose my head.





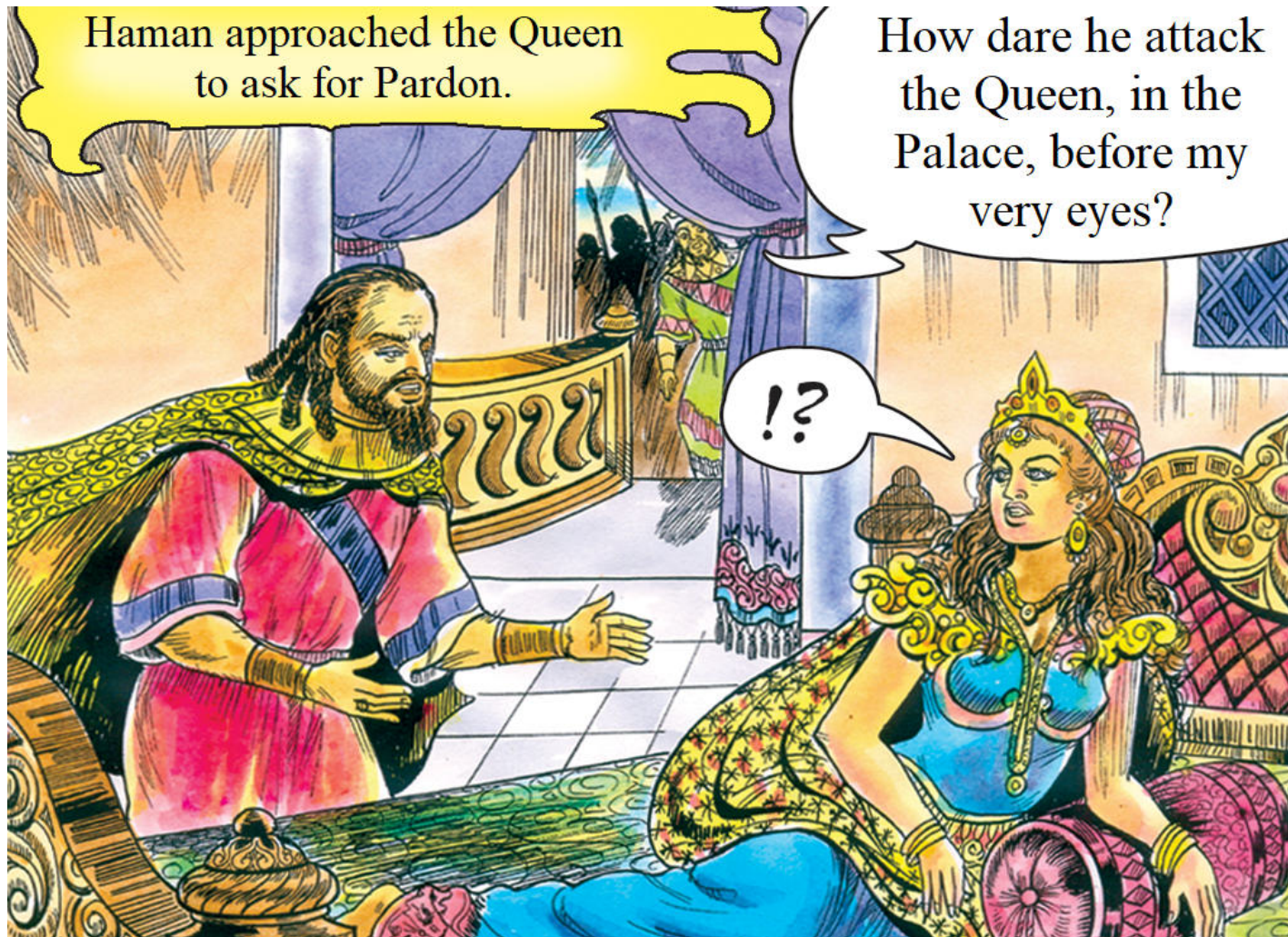


There is no way  
out except asking  
the Queen's  
pardon.

Haman approached the Queen  
to ask for Pardon.

How dare he attack  
the Queen, in the  
Palace, before my  
very eyes?

!?





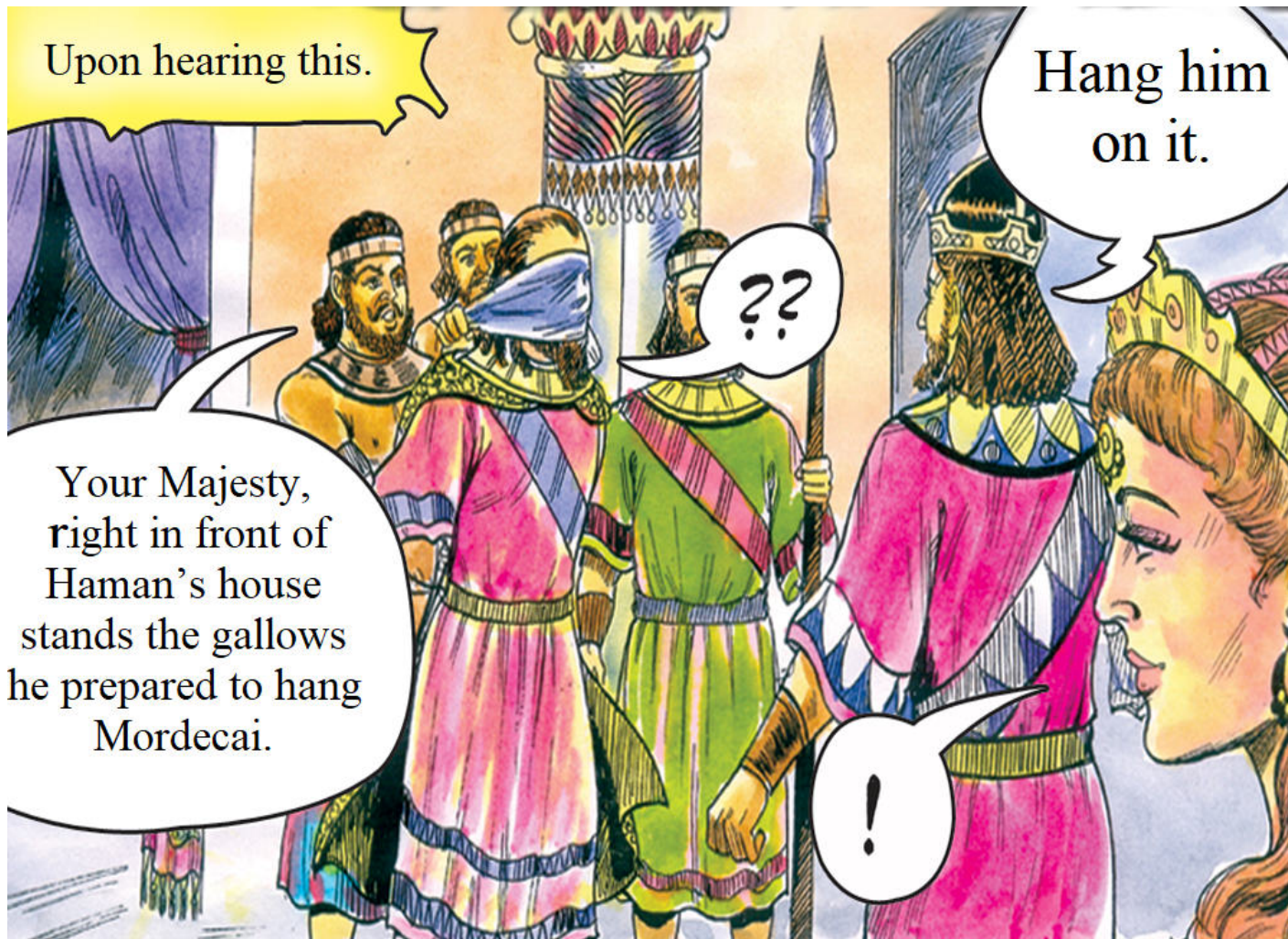
Upon hearing this.

Hang him  
on it.

??

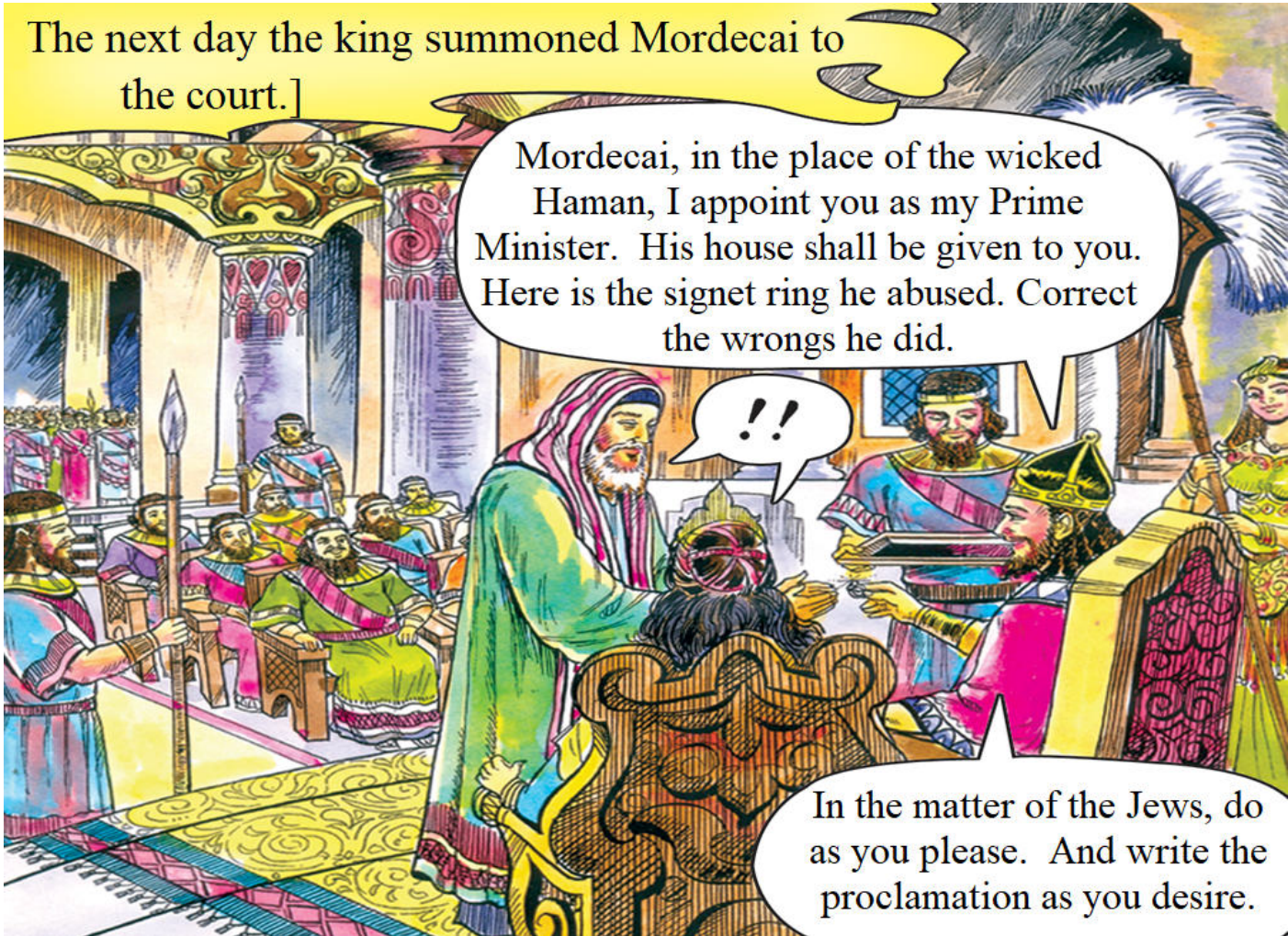
Your Majesty,  
right in front of  
Haman's house  
stands the gallows  
he prepared to hang  
Mordecai.

!





The next day the king summoned Mordecai to the court.]



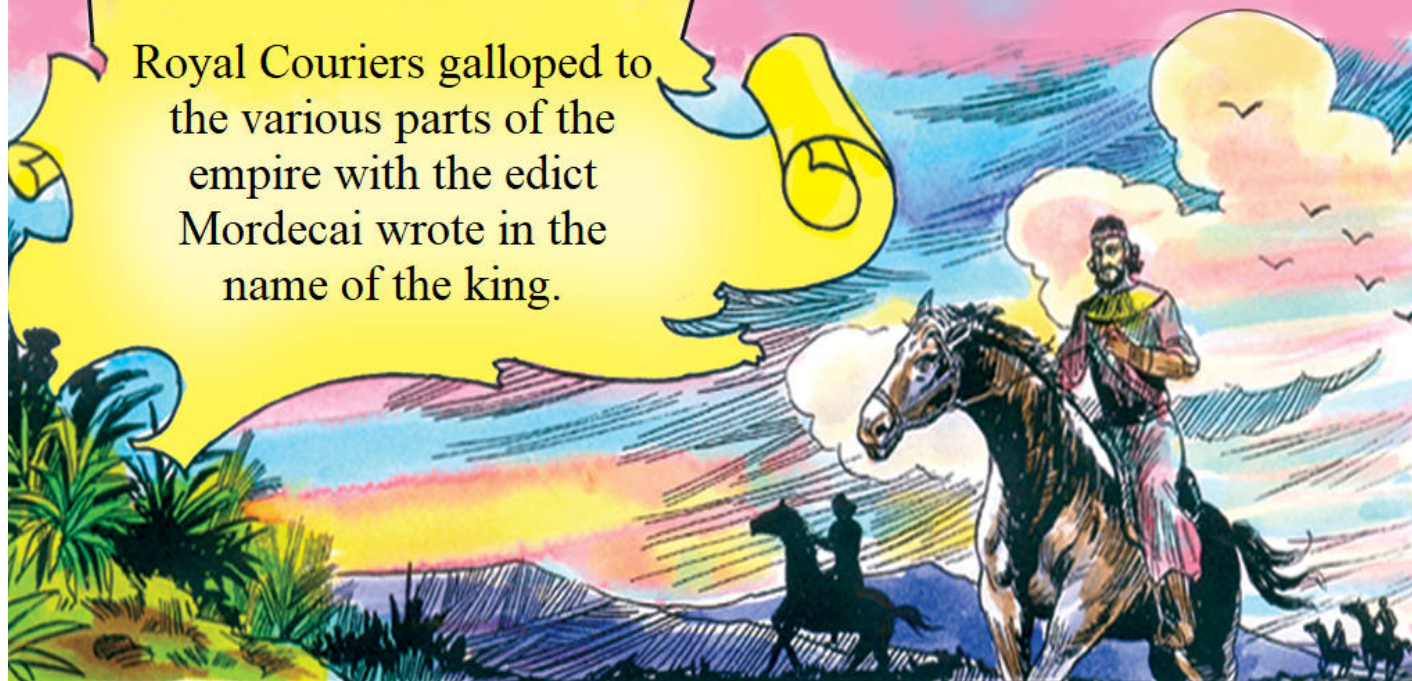
Mordecai, in the place of the wicked Haman, I appoint you as my Prime Minister. His house shall be given to you. Here is the signet ring he abused. Correct the wrongs he did.

!!

In the matter of the Jews, do as you please. And write the proclamation as you desire.



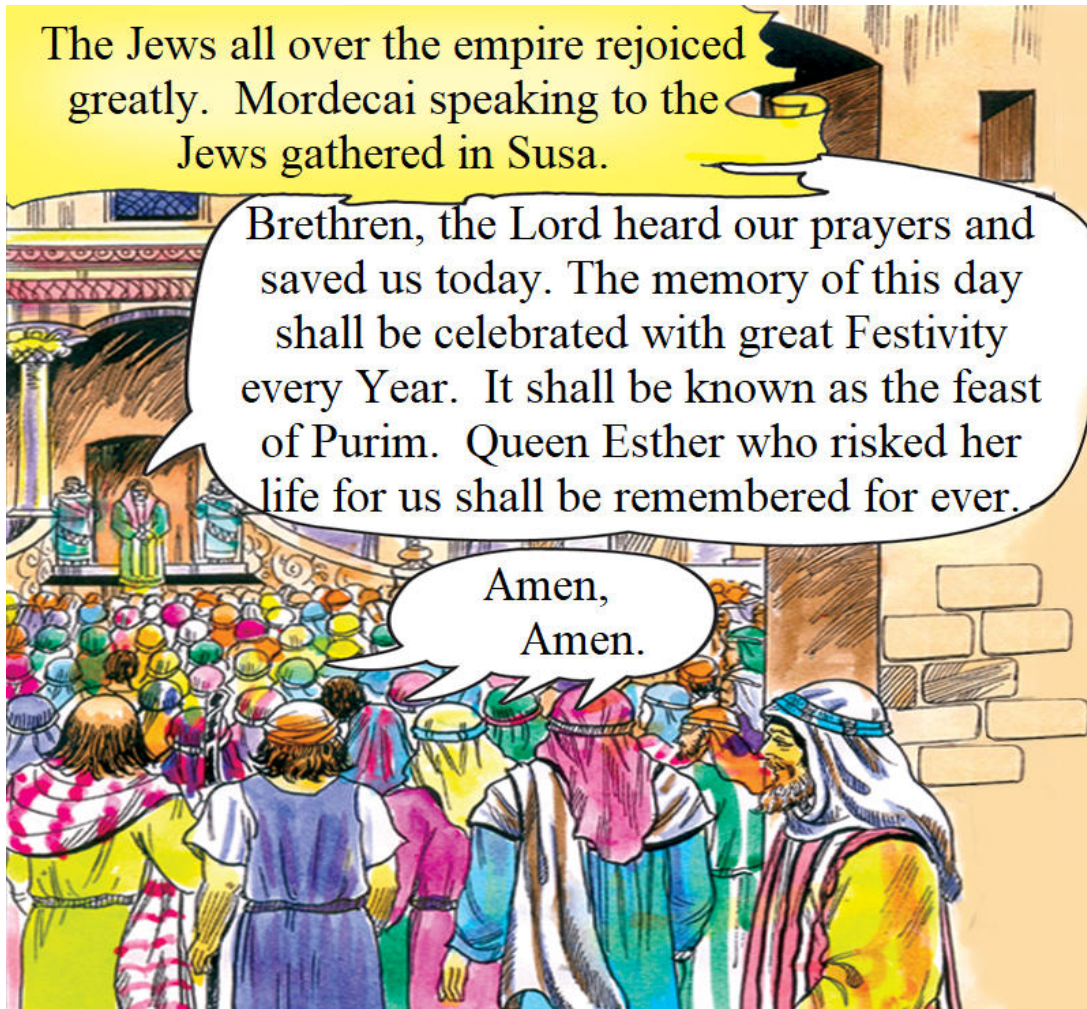
Royal Couriers galloped to  
the various parts of the  
empire with the edict  
Mordecai wrote in the  
name of the king.



The Jews all over the empire rejoiced greatly. Mordecai speaking to the Jews gathered in Susa.

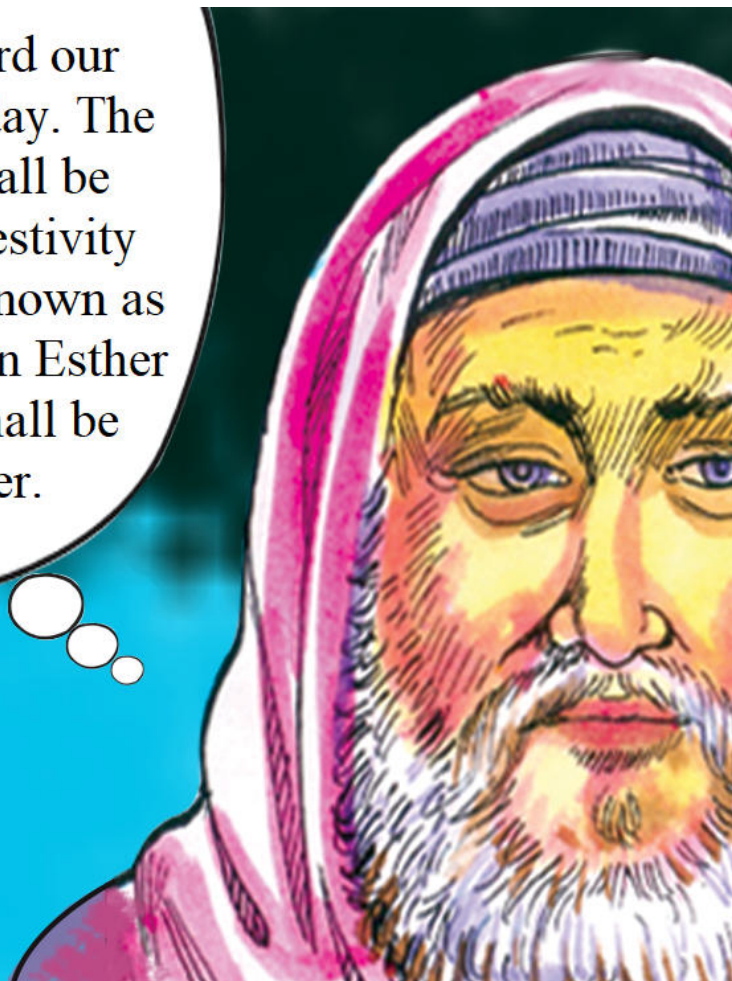
Brethren, the Lord heard our prayers and saved us today. The memory of this day shall be celebrated with great Festivity every Year. It shall be known as the feast of Purim. Queen Esther who risked her life for us shall be remembered for ever.

Amen,  
Amen.





Brethren, the Lord heard our prayers and saved us today. The memory of this day shall be celebrated with great Festivity every Year. It shall be known as the feast of Purim. Queen Esther risked her life for us shall be remembered for ever.



The power of the Lord is not in  
the sword. He scatters the  
proud, pulls down the mighty  
from their thrones and works  
wonders through the humble.

**NEXT STORY**

**The widow who saved the Nation**

**Judith**



# Questions

1. When did Ahasuerus rule Persia?
2. How did Vasti lose her position as the Queen?
3. Why did Haman hate the Jews?
4. Why did Mordecai refuse to bow to Haman?
5. Why did Ahasuerus honor Mordechai?
6. Why was Ester afraid to go before the king?
7. Explain the origin of the feast of Purim.
8. How did Ester prepare herself to approach the Throne?
9. What was Mordechai's dream and its explanation?
10. What lesson do we learn from the book of Esther?

# THE ENTIRE BIBLE IN COMICS

1. Cain and Abel
2. Abraham
3. Jacob
4. Joseph
5. Moses
6. Joshua
7. Samson
8. Ruth
9. Samuel
10. Saul
11. David
12. King David
13. Solomon
14. Elijah
15. Amos
16. Hosea
17. Micah

18. Isaiah
19. Jeremiah
20. Ezekiel
21. Zechariah
22. Jonah
23. Job
24. Tobit
25. Daniel
26. Susanna
27. Esther
28. Judith
29. Maccabeus
30. The Maccabees
31. A World Awaiting
32. Light of the world
33. The Herald
34. The Prophet
35. The Liberator

36. The One to come
37. The Lord of the Universe
38. Son of God
39. The Son of Man
40. In the shadow of the cross
41. The Way
42. Son of David
43. Bread of Life
44. The Redeemer
45. With us forever
46. Tongues of fire
47. Baptism in blood
48. The chosen vessel
49. Libation
50. Come, Lord Jesus
51. Woman