## Esther in Art and Text: A Role Reversal

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## Chapter Six:

- בַּלַיְלָה הַהוּא, נַדְדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶדְ; וַיֹּאמֶר, לְהָבִיא אֶת ספַר הזכרנות דברי הימים, ויהיו נקראים, לפני On that night could not the king sleep; and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles, and they were read before the king.

וַיָּמַצֵא כַתוּב, אֲשֶׁר הָגִּיד מַרְדָּכֵי עַל-בִּגְתַנָא וַתֵרשׁ ב שָׁנֵי סַרִיסֵי הַמֵּלֵךְ--מְשׁׁמְרֵי, הַסַּף: אֲשֶׁר בִּקְשׁוּ לשָׁלֹחַ יַד, בַּמֶּלֶךְ אֲחַשְׁוַרוֹשׁ. 2 And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, of those that kept the door, who had sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus.

ָגַ וַיֹּאמֵר הַמֵּלֵךְ--מַה-נַּצַשָּׂה יִקָר וּגִדוּלַּה לְמַרְדָּכַי, עַל-זַה; וַיֹּאמָרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֵּלֵך, מְשַׁרְתַיו, לֹא-נַעֲשָׂה עמו, דַבַר.

**3** And the king said: 'What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?' Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him: 'There is nothing done for him.'

ד וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ, מִי בֶחָצֵר; וְהָמָן בָּא, לַחֲצַר בֵּית-הַמֶּלֶךְ הַחִיצוֹנָה, לֵאמֹר לַמֶּלֶךְ, לְתְלוֹת אֶת-מֶרְדֶּכֵי על-העץ אַשֶׁר-הכין לוֹ.

4 And the king said: 'Who is in the court?'--Now Haman was come into the outer court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.--

ָרָ נִיֹאמָרוּ נַעַרֵי הַמֵּלֶךְ, אֱלַיו--הָנַּה הָמָן, עֹמֵד בַּחָצֵר; וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ, יַבוֹא. 5 And the king's servants said unto him: 'Behold, Haman standeth in the court.' And the king said: 'Let him come in.'

וּ וַיַּבוֹא, הָמֶן, וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַמֶּלֵך, מַה-לַּעֲשׁוֹת בָּאִישׁ אַשֶׁר הַמֵּלֵךְ חָפָץ בִּיקַרוֹ; וַיֹּאמֵר הַמָּן, בִּלְבּוֹ, לְמִי יַחָפּץ הַמֶּלֶךְ לַעֲשׁוֹת יָקַר, יוֹתַר מַמֵּנִי. **6** So Haman came in. And the king said unto him: 'What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?'--Now Haman said in his heart: 'Whom would the king delight to honour besides myself?'--

ז וַייֹאמֶר הָמֶלֶךְ: אִישׁ, אֵשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ: אָישׁ, אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ: אָישׁ, אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ 7 And Haman said unto the king: 'For the

ביקרוֹ. man whom the king delighteth to honour,

ת יָבִיאוּ לְבוּשׁ מַלְכוּת, אֲשֶׁר לָבַשׁ-בּוֹ הַמֶּלֶךּ; וְסוּס, אֲשֶׁר רָכַב עָלָיו הַמֶּלֶךּ, וַאֲשֶׁר נִתַּן כֶּתֶר מַלְכוּת, בּרֹאשׁוֹ. **8** let royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and on whose head a crown royal is set;

שׁ וְנָתוֹן הַלְּבוּשׁ וְהַסּוּס, עַל-יַד-אִישׁ מִשָּׂבִי הַמֶּלֶהְ הַפֵּרְחְּמִים, וְהִלְבִּישׁוּ אֶת-הָאִישׁ, אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶהְ חָפֵץ בִּיקָרוֹ; וְהִרְכִּיבֵהוּ עַל-הַסּוּס, בִּרְחוֹב הָעִיר, וְקָרְאוּ לְפַנֵיו, כַּכָה יֵעֲשֶׂה לָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֵּלֶהְ חַפֵּץ בִּיקַרוֹ.

9 and let the apparel and the horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man therewith whom the king delighteth to honour, and cause him to ride on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him: Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.'

י וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהָמָן, מַהֵּר קַח אֶת-הַלְּבוּשׁ וְאֶת-הַסּוּס כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ, וַעֲשֵׂה-כֵן לְמָרְדָּכֵי הַיְּהוּדִי, הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ: אַל-תַּפֵּל דָּבָר, מִכּּל אֲשֶׁר דּבַּרְתַּ. 10 Then the king said to Haman: 'Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate; let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.'

יא וַיִּקְח הָמָן אֶת-הַלְּבוּשׁ וְאֶת-הַסּוּס, וַיַּלְבֵּשׁ אֶת-הַסּוּס, וַיַּלְבֵּשׁ אֶת-מֶּרְדֶּכָי; וַיַּרְכִּיבֵהוּ, בִּרְחוֹב הָעִיר, וַיִּקְרָא לְפָנָיו, כָּכָה יֵעֲשֵׁה לַאִישׁ אֲשֵׁר הַמֵּלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בִּיקרוֹ.

11 Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and caused him to ride through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him: 'Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.'

יב וַיָּשָׁב מֶּרְדָּכֵי, אֶל-שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶּדְ; וְהָמָן נִדְחַף אֶל-בַּיתוֹ, אֲבֵל וַחָפּוּי ראשׁ.

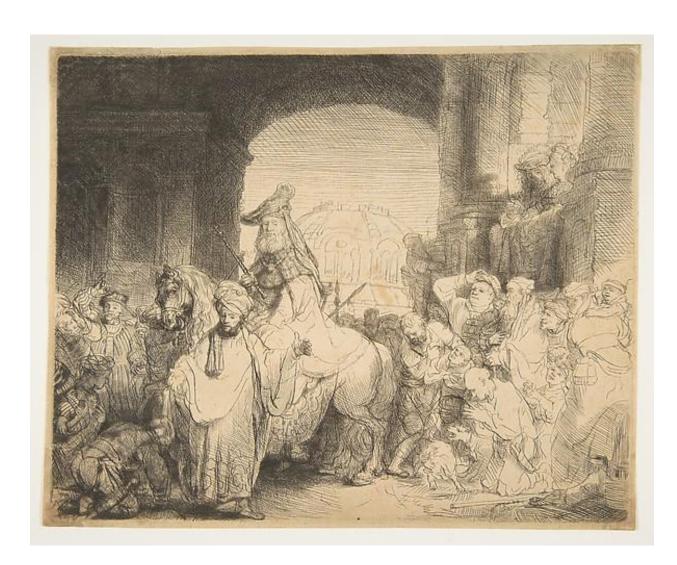
**12** And Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hasted to his house, mourning and having his head covered.

יג וַיְסַפֵּר הָמָן לְזֶרָשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ, וּלְכָל-אֹהָבָיו, אֵת, כָּל-אֲשֶׁער הָבְהוּ; וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ חֲכָמִיו וְזֶרָשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ, אִם מִזֶּרַע הַיְּהוּדִים מָרְדֶּכֵי אֲשֶׁר הַחִלּוֹתָ לְנְפֹּל לְפָנָיו לֹא-תוּכַל לוֹ--כִּי-נַפוֹל תּפּוֹל, לְפַנִיו.

13 And Haman recounted unto Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him: 'If Mordecai, before whom thou hast begun to fall, be of the seed of the Jews, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.'

יד עוֹדָם מְדַבְּרִים עִמּוֹ, וְסָרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הָגִּיעוּ; וַיַּבְהָלוּ לְהָבִיא אֶת-הָמֶן, אֶל-הַמִּשְׁתָּה אֲשֶׁר-עַשְׂתָה אֶסְתַּר. 14 While they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

The Triumph of Mordecai Rembrandt van Rijn ca. 1641 Etching and drypoint



The Triumph of Mordecai Paolo Veronese 1556 Oil on canvas

