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Esther



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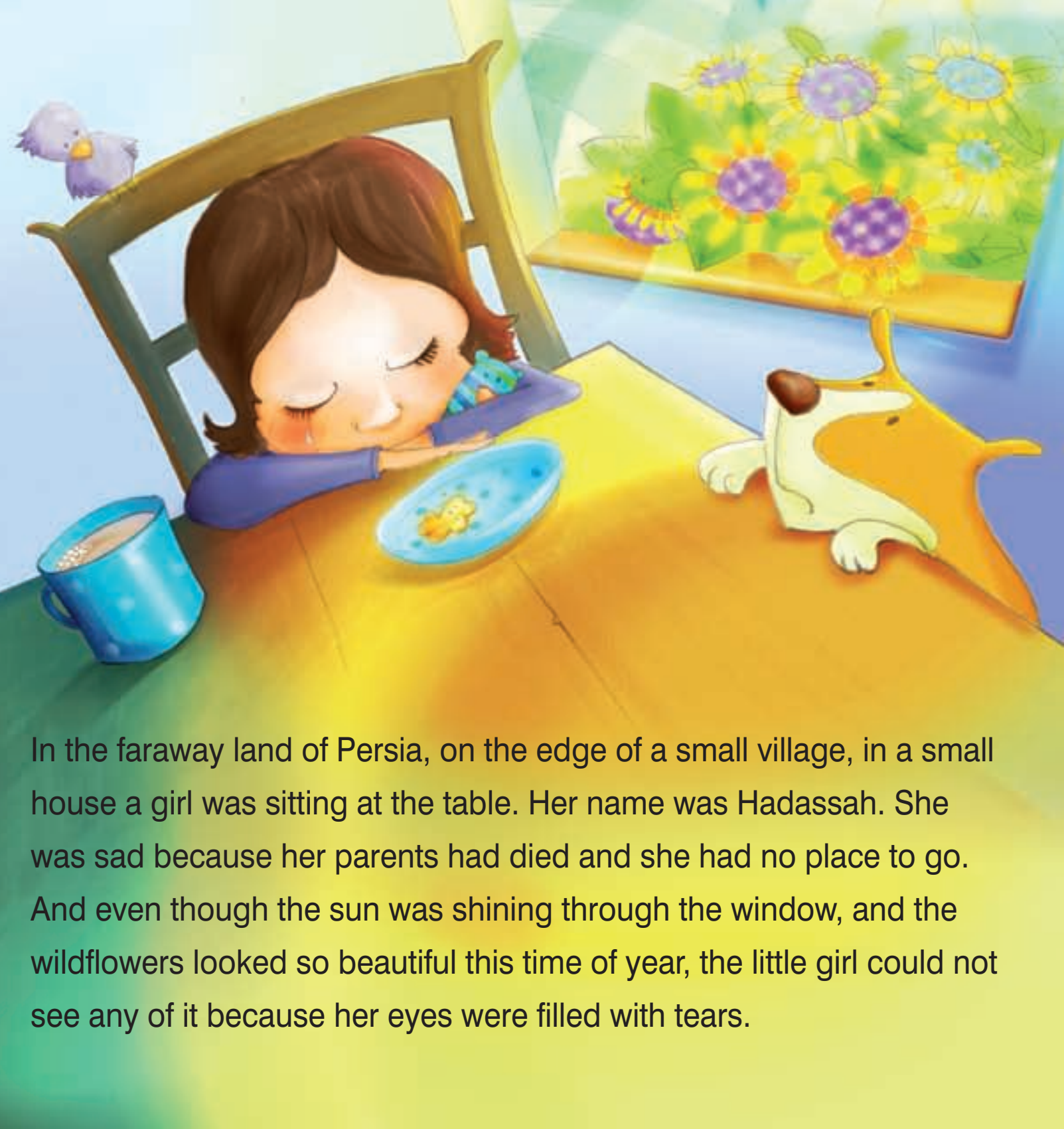
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In the faraway land of Persia, on the edge of a small village, in a small house a girl was sitting at the table. Her name was Hadassah. She was sad because her parents had died and she had no place to go. And even though the sun was shining through the window, and the wildflowers looked so beautiful this time of year, the little girl could not see any of it because her eyes were filled with tears.



“Lord, my God, what will become of me now? Where should I go? Who will take care of me?”—Hadassah prayed. Just as she finished praying, there was a knock on the door of her little, modest house. “Who could it be?”—the little girl wondered. It was Mordecai, her distant cousin.



“Hadassah, my wife and I would like you to come and live with us. This is the day when our home can become yours.” There was a lot of joy. The little girl took her clothes and traveled with Mordecai to the town of Susa, where the King of Persia lived. She was no longer a sad orphan, she was a happy girl now who could finally feel the warmth of the sun on her cheeks and make a gorgeous bouquet of wildflowers to give to her new family.

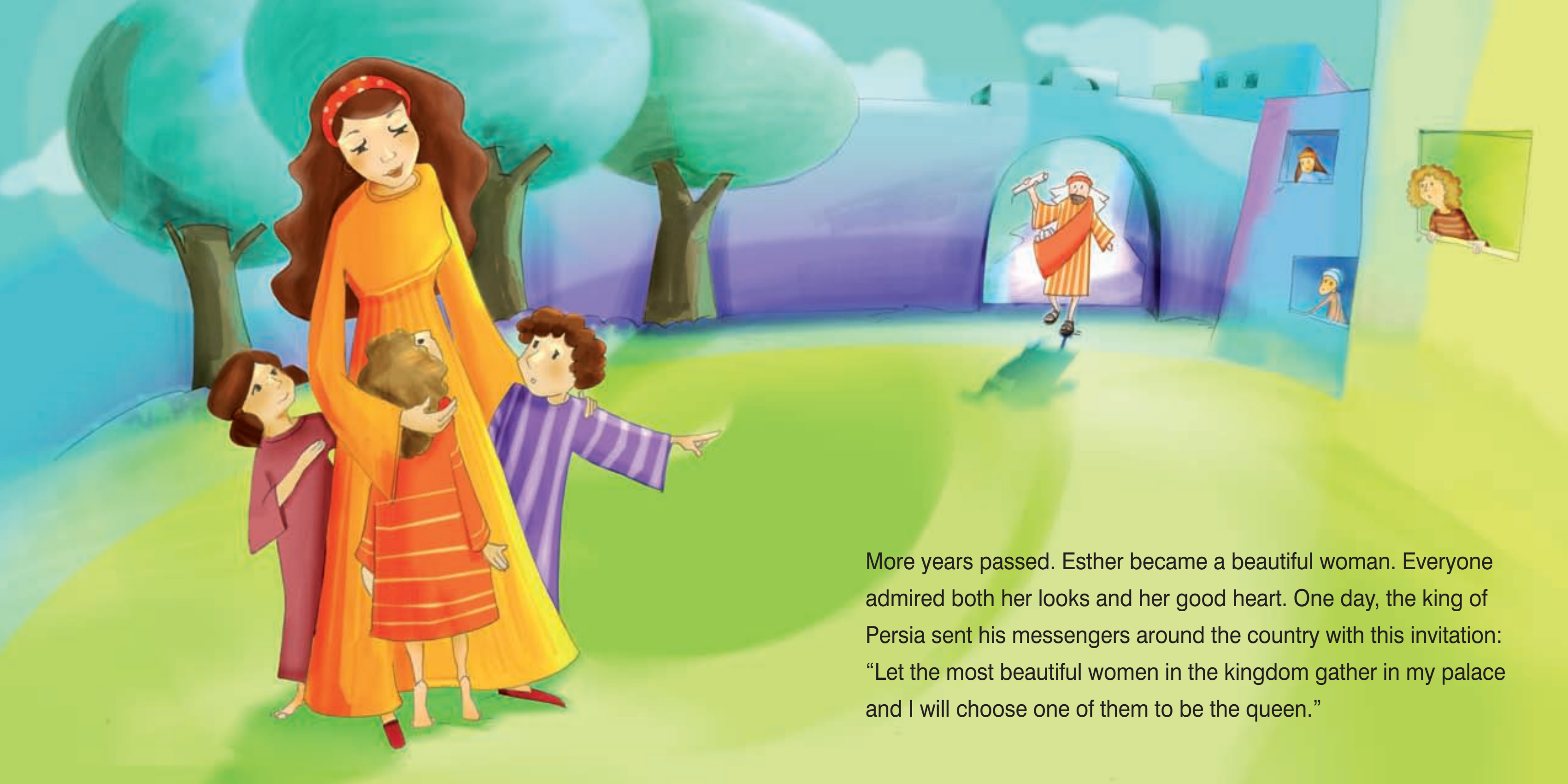




Years passed and Hadassah grew to be a beautiful young woman. She worked hard and was very happy. She knew that the new home, a loving family and everything else she had had been given to her by God. Every evening she would sit on the stairs, look at the stars and pray: "Lord, my God, thank you for taking care of me."

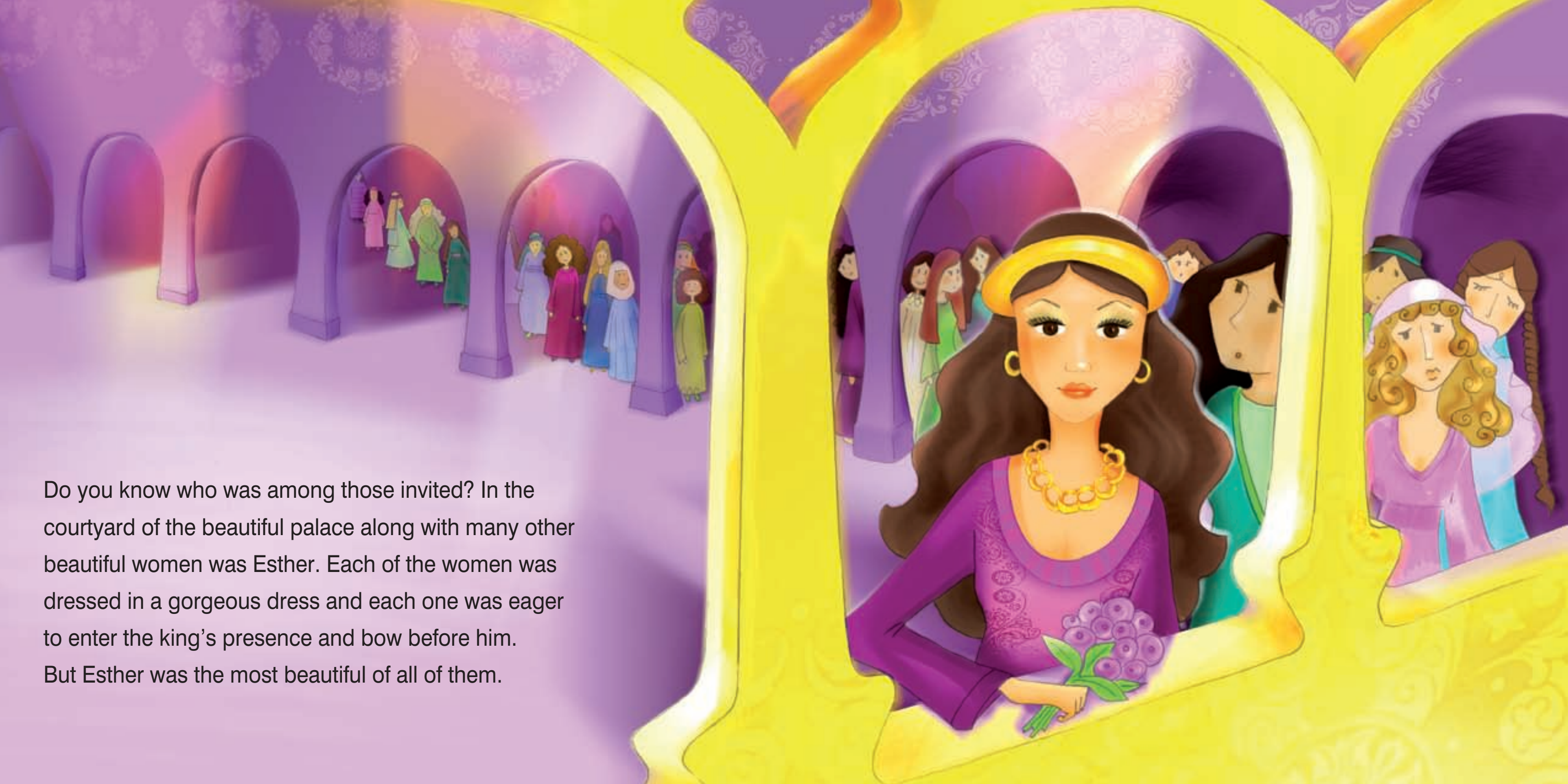


On one of such evenings, Mordecai sat next to her. “Hadassah, from now on you will have a new name. It’s Esther. It means ‘a star’, because you have brought happiness and laughter into our house. Esther liked her new name very much. And she showed that she understood its meaning by trying to shine as a star in everything she did. She worked diligently, helped those in need and brought joy into the lives of those who were sad.



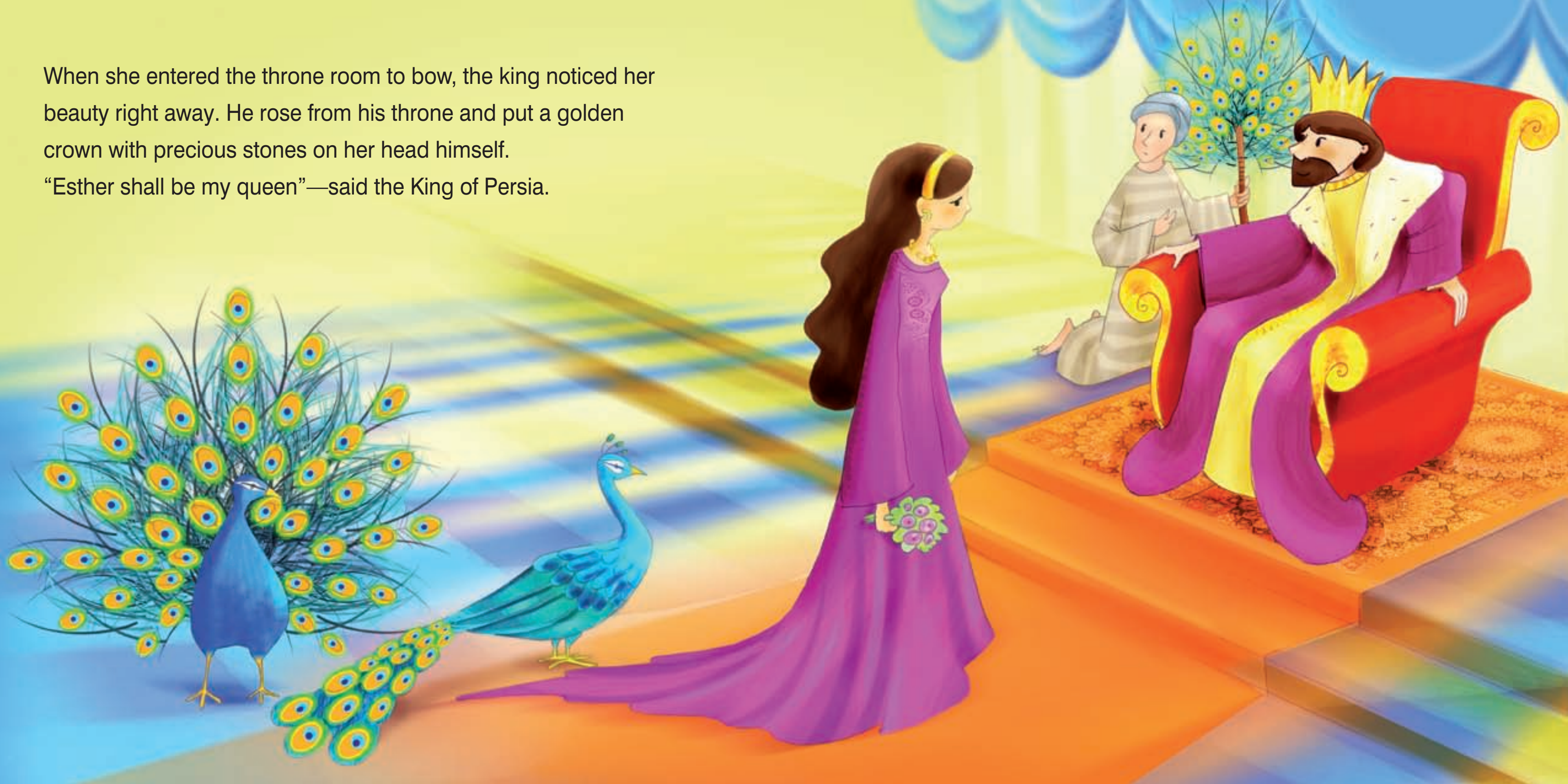
More years passed. Esther became a beautiful woman. Everyone admired both her looks and her good heart. One day, the king of Persia sent his messengers around the country with this invitation: “Let the most beautiful women in the kingdom gather in my palace and I will choose one of them to be the queen.”

Do you know who was among those invited? In the courtyard of the beautiful palace along with many other beautiful women was Esther. Each of the women was dressed in a gorgeous dress and each one was eager to enter the king's presence and bow before him. But Esther was the most beautiful of all of them.



When she entered the throne room to bow, the king noticed her beauty right away. He rose from his throne and put a golden crown with precious stones on her head himself.

“Esther shall be my queen”—said the King of Persia.



From that day on, Esther lived in the royal palace which was surrounded by beautiful gardens full of fragrant flowers and ornamental shrubs. The queen's favorite pastime was to walk the alleys of the wonderful gardens. Esther enjoyed her new life and home.



Every evening she gazed at the stars and prayed to her Lord:
“O, Lord, my God, thank you for caring for me.”
She had to learn the habits and customs of the royal court. And although she was the queen and had many servants and guards now, Esther was afraid of one royal custom. It said
“No one can enter the king's hall without the king's permission or order. Anyone who enters without being ordered or invited will be sentenced to death unless the king extends his golden scepter to that person.”

One day, a terrible thing happened. The King of Persia listened to some bad advice from his advisors and created a new law saying that anyone who will follow a law other than the royal law shall be put to death.

During that time there were many Israelites in Persia who followed a different law given to them by God. Esther and Mordecai were among those people. What will happen to Esther now?





Mordecai did not wait long. He sent a messenger to Esther with the following message:

“Esther, I believe that you were chosen to be the queen because the Lord God wanted you to save His people. You must go to the king and beg him to spare the lives of God’s people.”

Esther sent the messenger back to Mordecai with this message:

“How am I supposed to do it? Doesn’t Mordecai know that no one without an invitation from the King of Persia can enter the king’s hall? Even I cannot go there if the king doesn’t invite me. I won’t dare enter the king’s hall, because if he doesn’t extend his scepter, I will perish.”

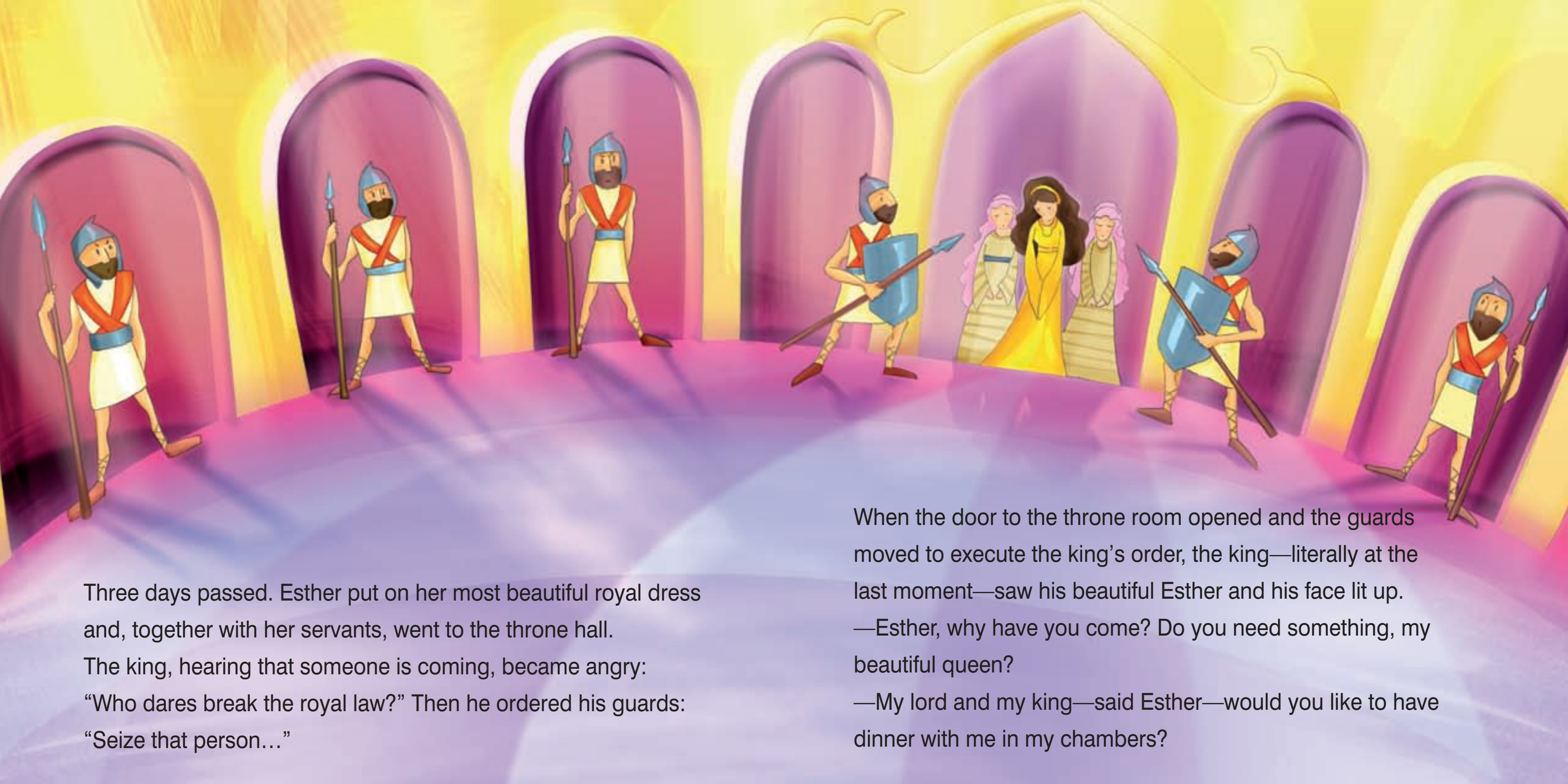


Mordecai sent another message:

“Do not be afraid, because wherever you go,
God will be with you.”

Esther believed Mordecai’s words. She told
the messenger to ask her cousin to order
three days of prayers. God’s people did as
she ordered and prayed for her all around
Persia. The queen and her female servants
prayed in the palace.





Three days passed. Esther put on her most beautiful royal dress and, together with her servants, went to the throne hall.

The king, hearing that someone is coming, became angry:

“Who dares break the royal law?” Then he ordered his guards:

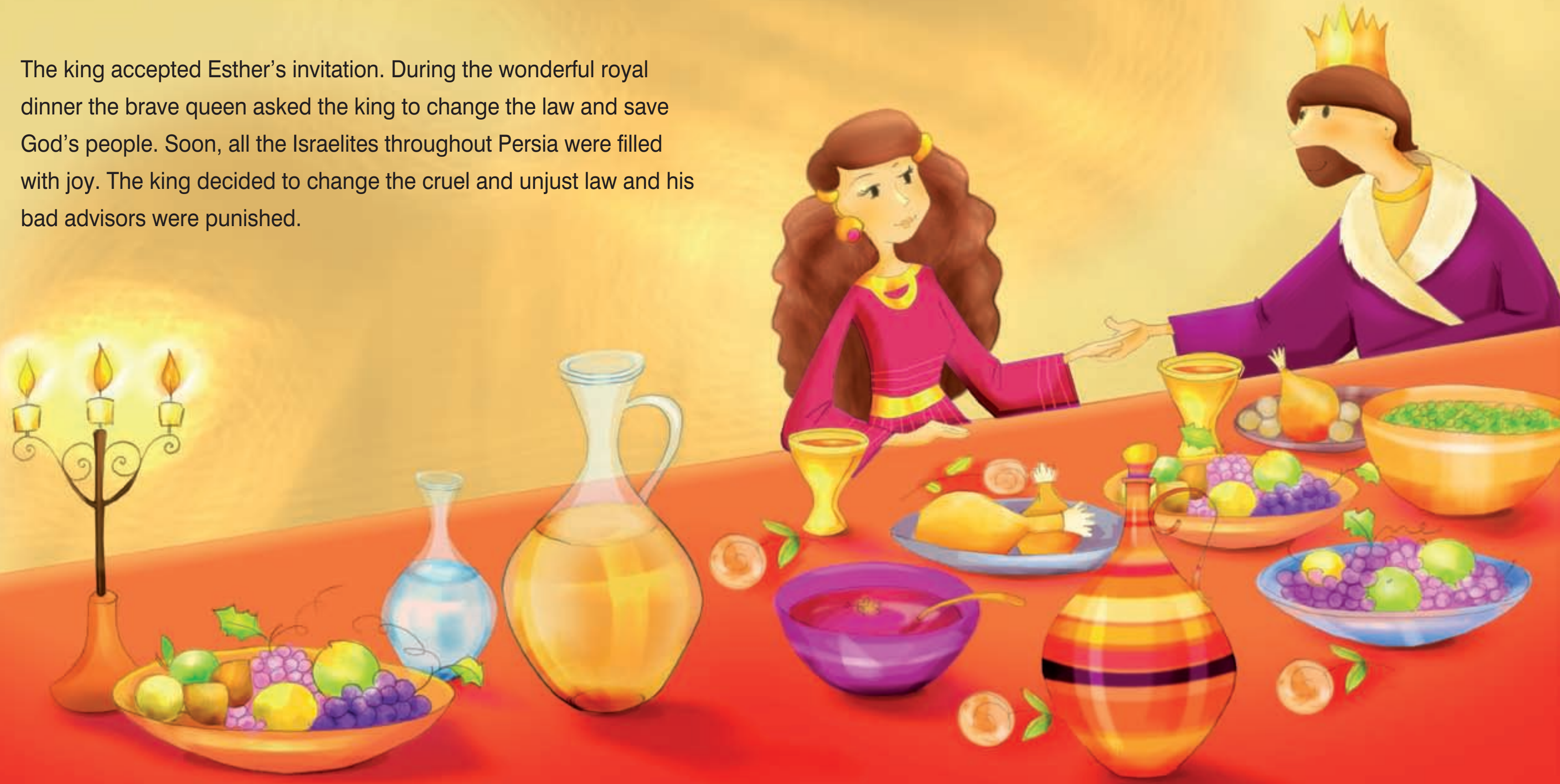
“Seize that person...”

When the door to the throne room opened and the guards moved to execute the king’s order, the king—literally at the last moment—saw his beautiful Esther and his face lit up.

—Esther, why have you come? Do you need something, my beautiful queen?

—My lord and my king—said Esther—would you like to have dinner with me in my chambers?

The king accepted Esther's invitation. During the wonderful royal dinner the brave queen asked the king to change the law and save God's people. Soon, all the Israelites throughout Persia were filled with joy. The king decided to change the cruel and unjust law and his bad advisors were punished.





From that day on, the people of God were safe, and the one they could thank for it was the beautiful Queen Esther, who once was an orphan named Hadassah and became a shining star.

And you, my little princess, can also grow up to become a beautiful and brave woman one day. You must remember, though, to always trust God because no one and nothing can separate you from His love (Romans 8:35-37).

