

**HADASSAH**  
**By Rachelle Ferguson**

SCENE ONE: Exterior set - Morning

[SHIVA eagerly enters Stage Right, as HADASSAH enters Left carrying a large basket of clothes.]

**Shiva:** *[excitedly]* Hadassah, shalom!

**Hadassah:** *[warmly]* Shalom, Shiva.

**Shiva:** Have you heard the news? From the palace?

**Hadassah:** *[uncertain]* I guess not. *[wryly]* No doubt the king has made a fool of himself again?

**Shiva:** Hush! We're hardly a stone's throw from the palace gate.

**Hadassah:** *[lightly]* I daresay the guards would share my opinion. The king is a drunkard and a puppet, and all Persia knows it. He doesn't rule us—he doesn't even rule himself.

**Shiva:** Well, he has power, whatever you say—and he's willing to use it. This news proves the fact: he has deposed his own queen. They say she disobeyed some wish of his, so he has decreed her execution.

**Hadassah:** *[surprised, but not shocked]* Well! I admire her for defying him. *[grimly]* Though I admit the consequence is no surprise.

**Shiva:** *[enthusiastically, relishing the chance for gossip]* Now the question is, who will become queen in her stead? Will he choose one of the wives in his harem, or some foreign princess...?

**Hadassah:** I will leave the speculation up to you. You know I pay no heed to palace intrigues. *[smiling imperturbably, as SHIVA rolls her eyes]* I have my own life. I don't need to live theirs.

**Shiva:** *[slyly]* Your head is just too full of Ithamar Ben-Reuel to think of anything else—that's the truth.

**Hadassah:** *[instantly becoming more serious, even reproachful]* Shiva, that is your imagination.

**Shiva:** I remember what you said of him, before Passover. You admire him—and he you, I'm sure.

**Hadassah:** Nonsense. I must go—I have washing to do. *[moving Stage Right, then softening slightly and turning back momentarily]* It was good to see you.

**Shiva:** You too. *[smirks good-naturedly]* And don't take everything so seriously. *[HADASSAH smiles despite herself and shakes her head helplessly.]* I'll see you tomorrow. *[moving Stage Left]*

**Hadassah:** Yes—shalom. *[exits Stage Right, as SHIVA exits Left]*

[End of Scene.]

[END OF SCRIPT SAMPLE.]