

Dramatis Personae:

Announcer, Inspector, Lion Narrator	Marcia Talmage
Writer, Chazan	Naomi Cohen
Bullwinkle, Masked Man, Haman	David Fishman
Peabody	Dena Kronfeld
Alan Sherman	Sam Kronfeld
Esther (as child), Narrator I, Teresh	Yocheved Muffs
Mordechai (as uncle), Narrator II, Bullwinkle	David Kronfeld
Mudley, Lion	Stanley Moses
Bighan, Mordechai (as pawnbroker)	Howard Eisenberg
Mordechai (as Gandalf)	Akiva Fishman
Boromir	Yossi Cirlin
Aragorn	Ben Smyser
Gimli	Yoni Bokser
Legolas	Ben Bokser
Esther (as Hobbit)	Eliana Fishman
Vashti	Eliana Schleifer

David
K

TAPE 1

Prologue

ANNOUNCER:

Good evening everyone and welcome to our Purim show. It takes place in the year 2002 of the Common Era. Or 5762 on the Hebrew calendar. Or the Chinese year of the Horse 4699. Or 1423 in the year of the hijra, in various middle eastern extremist countries. Or it is the month of Germinal of the year 209 of the French Revolution. Or in Star Trek time it is year... Oh, forget it. The time is the present.

Our story begins at the office of an upper East Side psychiatrist, where our hero, a plucky purim shpiel writer, is pouring out his heart and soul to his trusted psychoanalyst.

(Curtain opens. Writer is sitting in a chair or lying on a couch. The Shrink is sitting in a big chair facing away from the audience and is totally out of view.)

Scene 1, Analyst's Office

WRITER:

Hokey smoke, Dr. Freud. And I thought *last* year was depressing! This year, it's worse. Things are terrible. How am I ever going to write a purim shpiel? How am I ever going to make them laugh? Besides, why *should* I make them laugh? What's so good about laughing, anyway? There's nothing funny going on out there. These are just not very funny times we're living in.

BULLWINKLE:

Hmmm. Yes, go on...

WRITER:

I mean, hokey smoke, why should we be celebrating some minor holiday that tells us to act like morons, when every day feels like Yom Kippur!

BULLWINKLE:

Like Yom ha-Kippurim, you mean.

WRITER:

Exactly! I mean, let's face it, I'm bummed. Somehow, Purim doesn't seem to have super *relevance* this year.

BULLWINKLE:

Elephants? Super elephants? When did Purim ever have elephants?

WRITER:

Relevance. Super relevance.

BULLWINKLE: Oh. I must have gotten an R stuck in my ear somewhere. Sorry 'bout that.

WRITER:

But Dr. Freud, what should I do about it?

BULLWINKLE:

Do? What's there to do about it? don't you know what month it is?

WRITER:

(looks at his watch) You mean my time is up already?

BULLWINKLE:

No. (turns around and stands up, revealing that he is Bullwinkle). It's just that time of year. It's Adar. Take it from me, Bullwinkle J. Freud! You're allowed to be happy. You've got to be happy! That's what Adar is all about!

WRITER:

Hokey smoke!

BULLWINKLE: (sings, to the tune of "Downtown")

When you are low and it's the middle of winter, suddenly it's here -- Adar
Even when trouble's burstin' all of your bubbles, it will reappear -- Adar
It comes just when you need it even when life's really rotten
Prior generations had it worse, have you forgotten
How lucky you are
So don't be a depresso with such a long face
It's a shot of espresso for the whole human race
When it's Adar
Things can be swell when it's Adar
Life doesn't smell when it's Adar
It just depends upon you.
Adar... Adar

WRITER:

Though I feel crappy I should try to be happy and despair must go -- Adar
I'm glad that it got here, it's not Tevet or Shvat here anymore, I know -- Adar
It doesn't mean that everything is perfect or is peachy
It's just a change of attitude, I know I'm sounding preachy,
But now I can see
It's like getting a tune-up for your rusty car
Or cleaning the heads on your old VCR
When it's Adar
You can feel grand when it's Adar
Give me your hand and we'll go far
We'll have a great Purim time
(Dancing) Adar... Adar... Adar

BULLWINKLE:

So now, don't you see? Be happy -- it's Adar.

WRITER:

I get it. Life's really not so bad. And even if it is, we can just pay no attention to how lousy everything is and act like total idiots!

BULLWINKLE: Isn't that what faith is all about. But hey, don't take it from me. I want you to see for yourself -- there have been lots of times when things looked bad, and in the end, good triumphed over evil after all. I'm gonna take you on a trip back in time, to when things looked really bleak, but they worked out just fine ...

WRITER: You mean to when Bucky Dent hit the bloop homer over the Green Monster and the Yankees beat the Red Sox for the 1978 championship?

BULLWINKLE: Uh, no. That wasn't so good if you're a Red Sox fan.

WRITER: You mean to when the ground ball went through Bill Buckner's legs and the Mets won the 1985 World Series?

BULLWINKLE: Uh, no. That wasn't so good if you're a Red Sox fan.

WRITER: You mean to when Tony Perez hit Bill Lee's changeup for a home run and then Cincinnati took the lead and beat Boston for the World Series in '75?

BULLWINKLE: Uh, no. That wasn't so good if you're a Red Sox fan. I'm talking about the time of the Book of Esther. Back in ancient Persia. When the Jews were threatened by ... but I don't want to tell you the plot. Let's go see it for ourselves.

WRITER: How will we get there?

BULLWINKLE: Well, let me introduce you to my two friends, Mr. Peabody and his boy -- and song parodist -- Allan Sherman.

Scene 2: Historical Shushan

MR. PEABODY: Hello there. Peabody and Sherman here. Come inside and we'll set the Way Way Way Geva-a-a-ait All-the-Way-Back machine to the capital city of Shushan, in the time of King Achasher-choo-choo-vagash-maga-choo-push-voosh-maga-chicka-chick, or something like that. Ready Sherman?

SHERMAN: Ready, Mr. Peabody! (turns dials and presses buttons. Lights go on and off. Sign is place on easel: Peabody and Sherman: Way-out History)

MR. PEABODY: And here we are, on a quiet residential side-street in lovely downtown Shushan, where we meet our heroine on a most fateful day in her life, and in the life of the Jewish people. Let's listen in to what they have to say.

(Mordechai enters. Esther is bouncing a ball)

ESTHER: "E" my name is Esther and my husband's name is ... Egbert. We live in England and we sell...uh...uh.....

(brightens up) ESROGIMI

MORDECHAI: Hello little girl.



ESTHER:
(*suspicious*) Do I know you?

MORDECHAI:
Ooh, a smart little girl. I like that. Yessirree. You don't remember me? Well, little girl, I'm your legal guardian, and all-around man about town. Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Mordechai T. Mordechai, street corner sitter, sackcloth wearer, horseback rider

ESTHER:
What do you want from me?

MORDECHAI:
Ooh, a clever little girl. Gets right to the point. I like that. Well, Esther, as your legal guardian, I'm gonna make you an offer that you can't refuse!

(*sings to "Hello Mudda, Hello Fadda"*)

Hello Esther,
I'm your uncle
I've an idea
that's not bunkle
needs a chippy
There's a king here
And just maybe he might lead you to the khippie
(*aside to audience*) That's hupah in galizianer!

Just imagine
what could happen
to your lap an'
queen of Persia
If he fell in
d'you became the
It would be good news for all Jews in dispersia

Take some time, to think on it
But not too much, you re-alize
That this could be
A really major op-por-tun-i-ty-y-y

Dearest Esther
listen to me
Never think your
future's gloomy
With the king as
your protector
You would never be a welfare-check collector

There's a guy here
Osama Haman

He's an A.H.
really flamin'
sure an' begorrah
Anti-semitte
I would love to send him up to Tora Bora
(*imitates an explosion*)

If you're queen, then you could stand up
Brave and tall, and if this Haman
tried to hurt the Jews, then you could screw him...to...the wa-a-all

So dear Esther
put your smile on
Wear some makeup,
and your nylons
Go entice this
Ahshverush
That's the pshat --
now go concoct the payrush!

ESTHER:
Uh-oh!

ANNOUNCER: So folks, we leave our heroine faced with a tremendous dilemma: does she or doesn't she! Stay tuned for the next exciting episode, entitled "Tassles in the Castles" or "Iran to Persia" or "Hey, Buddy, Give Me a Shushan."

Tape 2

Scene 3: Goy Who Cried "Wolf"

BULLWINKLE:

And now it's time for Fractured Hasidic Tales.

(little boy dressed as chasid with wings prances back and forth across the stage while theme music is playing. Sign is placed on easel: *Fractured Hasidic Tales: The Goy Who Cried Wolf*)

NARRATOR I:

(in heavy Yiddish accent) End now, it's time for Fractured Hasidic Tales. Today's story is called "Dah Goy Who Cried Wolf."

Vunce upon a time, dere vuz a goy nem'd Shabtai. End ever-body called him Shopсы. Ecktuallly, Shopсы wasn't really a goy, he vuz just a reconstructionist. But in Bohra Pahrk, dey called him a goy.

Now, Shopсы hed a store -- a cludding store. It vuz called Shopсы's Cludding. But ever-one called it "Cheap's Cludding" because you could get such vunderful bahggin's dere.

You needed a new kapota, you went to Cheap's Cludding. You needed a shreiml, you went to Cheap's Cludding. You needed a new pair tzitzis, you went to Cheap's Cludding. Because you couldn't find dis stuff at da Gep or Old Newy. Or even et Benena Republic.

And ever-body called it Cheap's Cludding because it vuz so cheap. Like I said.

Anyway, dere vuz also dis boy in Bohra Pahrk nem'd Leizer Volf. (LV enters, does somersault, sneaks around) And ever-body called him just Volf. End dis Leizer Volf vuz a sneaky boy. A real fahrsh'tinkiner. De udder boyz in his cless, dey vur good boyz. Dey studied, dey davened. But not Leizer Volf. He vuz a troublemaker.

Vun day, it vuz Choyl Ha-moyed Sukkos, an' dis Leizer Volf saw a beautiful eppel henging as a decoration from da roof of his neighbor's sukkah. So he says to himself, "Hal! I'm gonna go get det eppel."

(LV mimics climbing) But as he tried to climb over da fence, he caught his kapota on a nail, end -- rrrrip -- it ripped a big hole in his kapota. Vah! a wreck! He vent home to his modda and she said, "Oy, vat a wreck!"

(LV goes to wing, mimics arguing with someone off-stage) So Volf says, "Ma, I gotta go to Cheap's Cludding and get me a new kapota."

NARRATOR II:

So Leizer Volf goes down to Cheap's Cludding and he starts looking at kapotas. Now, since it vuz Choyl Ha-moyed Sukkos, dere vuz a big sale on kapotas, because ever-body who needed a new kapota already bought dere new kapota for Rushashunnah. So Shopсы vuz marking down his inventory and mekkin' a big sale.

And Leizer Volf sees all dese kapotas marked "40 percent off." (LV mimics moving hangars on coatrack) But den, he spies dis beyootiful fency kapota -- oy it vuz gorgeous. Da best and finest silk. And his heart vent out and he wanted dis kapota. But dis beyootiful fency kapota vuz not on sale. End it vuz a lotta money.

So Volf starts lookin', and thinkin', and he decides he's gonna switch tegs from vun of de "on sale" kapotas to dis beautiful kapota.

But Shopсы, he's no dummy, and he sees Leizer Volf trying to fiddle vit da tegs and he cries out, "Volf, Volf, vattaya tink your doin'?"

(LV mimics being startled and scared) And Volf says, "Nuttin'. I'm just lookin'" and he runs out da store. (LV runs off.)



But he can't get dis kapota out of his mind, and da nex' day, Leizer Volf comes beck, (L V secretly slides back on stage) and he sees, dere's dat beautiful kapota, (L V mimics moving hangars on coatrack) and he tries to switch da tegs again.

But again, Shopsy sees him and he cries out, "Volf, Volf, vattaya t'ink your doin'?"

An' again, Volf says, "Nuttin', I'm only lookin'" and he runs out da store. (L V runs off.)

Da nex' day, Leizer Volf comes beck. (L V secretly slides back on stage) He vants dat kapota, and it's da last day Choyl Ha-moed. But today, Shopsy is voykin' in da beck, and his assistant is voykin' up in front at da kesh register. And dis assistant is not so smahit.

So Leizer Volf goes over (L V mimics moving hangars on coatrack) to da beautiful kapota and he switches tegs vid a "40% off" on-sale kapota.

An' he takes it to da kesh register, and de assistant rings it up, and Leizer Volf walks out da store vid da beyootiful kapota, and he says, "Ha!" (L V exits.)

De End.

End de moral of dis mayasa is, "You Should Never Trust a Volf in Cheap's Cludding."

Scene 4: Mudley Jew-Right

BULLWINKLE:

And now, for something completely different, I will pull a rabbit from this hat. (Rolls up sleeve, plunges hand into hat. Emerges with loud grogger, which he spins.) Hmm - looks like I should have a chat with the property department.

Tape 3

(Sign is placed on easel: *Mudley Jew-Right of the Muntees*. MUDLEY rides on a mop/broom across the stage to INSPECTOR, to Dudley Do-Right theme music)

MUDLEY: (saluting)

Mudley Jew-Right reporting for duty, Inspector, sir.

INSPECTOR:

Mudley, what have you been up to?

MUDLEY:

Oh, the usual -- trying to catch my archenemy, that villain Snidely Haman, sir.

INSPECTOR:

Is he on the loose again?

MUDLEY:

Yes, indeed, sir, and I hear that he is up to no good.

INSPECTOR:

No Good, Saskatchewan?

MUDLEY:

No, he's not there yet sir. He was last seen at Stinky Dog, Manitoba. But I'll catch him!

INSPECTOR:

So what have you been doing, Mudley?

MUDLEY: I've been reconnoitering, sir. Sitting on street corners and trying to gather information.

INSPECTOR: Mudley, you're covered with shmutz. Have you been wearing sackcloth and ashes again?

MUDLEY: Yes sir, an excellent disguise.

INSPECTOR: But Mudley, not on top of your uniform. That's not regulation for the Muntees.

MUDLEY: Don't you mean Mounties, sir?

INSPECTOR: No Mudley, I mean Muntees.

MUDLEY: What are Muntees anyway, sir?

INSPECTOR: They're law enforcement officers who like to eat mun.

MUDLEY: But sir, I prefer prune myself!

INSPECTOR: Then you should have joined the Prunetees, not the Muntees! Anyway, what have you learned.

MUDLEY: Well sir, while I was sitting on the street corner, I overheard Bigthan and Teresh hatching a terrible plot to kill the king!

INSPECTOR: A plot to kill the king? Can you recall their exact conversation?

MUDLEY: I did better than that. I videotaped it! Here it is:

(He acts like he's putting in a cassette, while BIGTHAN and TERESH appear, coming in from opposite sides and meeting in the middle of the stage. They sing, to the tune of "Frere Jacques".)

T: Bigthan!

B: Teresh!

T: Bigthan!

B: Teresh!

T: Bigthan!

B: Teresh!

T: Bigthan!

B: Teresh!

T:

Bigthani!

B:

Teshi!

Here's the thing:

Kill the king

Is that what you've been up to?

It's what I've put my kup to

BOTH:

(holding their heads with both hands) Ding, dong, ding

T:

Bigthani!

B:

Teshi!

T:

Bigthani!

Here's my plan

Here's my plan

We'll jump him when he's jogging

Then knock him on his noggin

Maybe we can drown him

That would sure uncrown him

We could pulverize him

That might well surprise him

Maybe give him poison

Pour it in his hoyzin

Fix his elevator

Feed him to a gator

Spear him with a skewer

Toss him in the sewer

Kidnap all his kinder

Push him out the window

Yes, defenestrate him!

Let's decapitate him

Hey I gotta run now

Don't forget your gun now

T:

I'll talk to you later

Say hi to your pater

Toodle -- oo

Toodle -- oo

BOTH:

Toooo-die - oo! *(they exit)*

INSPECTOR:

Jumping jellybeans, Mudley, you have uncovered a dastardly plot! I'll make sure the king rewards you well for this. What would you like? A vacation at the Kandahar Club Med? A hundred shares of *charbonah.com*? A week of breakfasts at the Metro Diner?

MUDLEY:

Inspector, do you think...do you think...that the king might give me a ride on a real horse?

INSPECTOR:

Well, Mudley, don't get your hopes up!

(Mudley rides off on his broom -- theme music again)

TAPE 4

Scene 5: Lord of the Rings

Scene 5: Lord of the Rings

BULLWINKLE:

And now it's time for another fairy tale. (Sign is placed on easel: Lord of the Rings, emblazoned with 3 golden pawnbroker balls. A shadowy figure, a cloak over his face, enters and greets the pawnbroker.)

MASKED MAN:

Ho there, pawnbroker. I wish to wheel and deal.

MORDECAI:

Call me Mordecai, sir -- Lord of the Rings. Also Lord of necklaces, bracelets, brooches, and, today's special, bagels-and-lockets. So what can I do for you?

MASKED MAN:

Mordecai, I have a problem.

MORDECAI:

Only one? Oy, what a lucky man!

MASKED MAN:

It's a very big problem. You see, I have a very big harem. 365 wives demanding their conjugal rights. One for every night. Every single night. Do you have any idea how demanding that can be? Oy, if only I were twins. Then one of us could get some rest.

(sings to "I'm Just a Girl Who Can't Say No")

I'm just a king who can't say No

My wives insist I say Yes

I'd sure love being a "no show"

And take time to convalesce.

I've tried every aphrodisiac

To stimulate my carnal appetite

Oysters, rhino horn, Viagra, too

But somehow I never get it right

I'm just a king who can't say Nein

I'm tempted to abdicate

This seems to be the end-of-the-line

Could it be something I ate?

Harem beauties used to drive me mad

Now one look and I wanna cross the street

Now I just for a heating pad

That's my only way to be in heat

But I'm a king who can't say No

It is my royal responsibility

Alas and alack, poor me

I can't say, "Whoa!"

MORDECAI:

A different harem beauty for every day of the year? And probably two on Shabbos? I'll say it again. Oy, what a lucky man! But you look tired. Yes, yes. You look -- you'll pardon the observation -- all worn out. And those big black bags under your eyes -- they look like what the Shushan Department of Sanitation collects on Yom Sheini, R'vi! and Shishi!

MASKED MAN: I already have an appointment with the Royal Plastic Surgeon to fix that. The real problem is each harem beauty expects a gift -- silver, gold, pearls, emeralds, rubies, even diamonds. My treasure rooms are empty. And I already promised the people a tax cut this year. (takes out crown from under cloak.) How much will you lend me on this?

MORDECAI: King Ahashveroshi I'd know you anywhere. Of course, when you're in disguise, with a mask on your punim, it's a little harder. Here, let me see that crown. (holds it, hefts it, examines it) Your majesty, you've got a bigger problem than you think. Someone has pulled the old switcheroo. The gems in this crown are glass. And the crown itself? It's made of...fools' gold. That's right. Pyrites. Fools' Gold.

MASKED MAN: Then...then...my crown is worthless?

MORDECAI: Oh, I could give you a couple of zuzim for it. I could wear it in a Purimspiel. But other than that...

MASKED MAN: How could this have happened? My crown cost a fortune. The finest gems. The purest gold. I bought it from the Energy King himself, Kenneth Lay. And it's worthless?

MORDECAI: Who generally takes care of it for you, your majesty? I mean, you don't sleep in it, right? So when you're not wearing it, where does it go?

MASKED MAN: Haman, my faithful Grand Vizier takes it off my head at night with his own two loyal and trusty hands. In the morning, my courtiers brush my hair and then, plop, Haman puts it back on my head.

MORDECAI: This Haman. He's a person you can trust?

MASKED MAN: Haman... He wouldn't! He couldn't! Hmm... he just built a brand-new palace twice the size of mine. I wondered where he got the money.

MORDECAI: It's like Tom Cruise says, Majesty. Follow the money. And you... you followed it to the right place because... See? Here's the ticket with his name on it.

MASKED MAN: Why, that ungrateful, perfidious, disloyal, soon-to-be-headless wretch! But I can't afford to take my crown out of hock. And, woe is me, I'm still short of money for bonbons and baubles for my 365 wives. Mordecai, please, can you help me?

MORDECAI: First, the crown. It's stolen property. It's rightfully yours. And when you've hanged Haman from the highest tree in Shushan, I take this pawn ticket, foreclose on his palace, and it will be rightfully mine.

MASKED MAN: Mordecai, you shouldn't be running a pawn brokerage. You are the wisest man in my kingdom...next to me, of course. In fact, you shall be next to me...as my new Grand Vizier.

MORDECAI: Your majesty, I accept. *(to audience)* I have to. If I didn't, how could we have Purim? *(to King)* But as your new Grand Vizier, there's something I gotta tell you. You know why kings live such short lives? Oh, sure -- the occasional assassination. The occasional poisoned arrow. But mainly -- I've seen the statistics -- it's their harems. So, as your new Grand Vizier, I hereby proclaim that hereafter and forevermore, harem girls will bear labels on their viziers: "The surgeon-general has declared me bad for the king's health."

MASKED MAN:

Brilliant! A brilliant move!

MORDECAI:

And so you can get enough sleep and get rid of those bags on your eyes without unnecessary surgery...surgery Blue Crescent might not reimburse you for ... I, your new Grand Vizier, will make the supreme sacrifice. I will take your harem girls off your hands and out of your arms. And I will loyally, faithfully (also gratefully) personally take care of all 365 of them. Haman built me a big palace. There should be bedrooms enough for everybody!

MASKED MAN:

(plaintively) But I'm not used to sleeping alone.

MORDECAI:

Not a problem. I have a niece. A beautiful girl. Her name is Esther. She'll make you a wonderful wife. And don't worry. She's Jewish. Not only does she get headaches, she's all the time practicing laying. You'll get lots of sleep.

(They exit)

Scene 5: The Lion And The Chazan

(Sign in placed on easel: Aesop's Fable: The Lion And The Chazan)

NARRATOR:

And now it's time for an Aesop's fable. Once upon a time, a chazan took a walk in the forest. It was a lovely day, and as she walked she sang a little niggun.

CHAZAN:

(sings niggun)

NARRATOR:

Unfortunately, the niggun, lovely though it was, attracted the attention of a lion who had been napping behind a massive boulder. And instead of attentively listening and perhaps applauding at the end, the lion, who happened to be something of a Philistine, uttered a blood-curdling roar. The lion pounced upon the poor chazan and held her firmly between its paws, only inches from its sharp teeth. The chazan finished singing the niggun. Then she begged for her life.

CHAZAN:

Excuse me, your majesty. I know you're the king of the forest and I'm just a lowly chazan from a little shtetl on West End Avenue, you go down six stairs and there you are. But I'm a married woman. I've got six children. And, worst of all, the High Holidays are coming up and it's too late to get a replacement. So I wonder, could you possibly spare my life?

LION:

Why should I care about your mishegas? Do you care that I'm an endangered species? Did you protest that Disney kills Simba the Lion King every night except Mondays on Broadway? It's not live and let live anymore. It's not the Peaceable Kingdom. It's dog eat dog and lion eat chazan.

CHAZAN:

It's not easy to swallow a yarmulke. And tfilin? Fageddaboutit! You're not worried about indigestion?

LION:

Stop with the pilpul already and prepare to die. *(looks around)* Where did I put that ketchup?

CHAZAN:

(pulls jar of red stuff out of her pocket) If you don't mind, I'd prefer you use horse-radish. It's always been a favorite of mine.

LION:

(accepts jar) Don't mind if I do. *(softening a bit)* I hope one of your children is old enough to say kaddish for you. But regardless, say your prayers. I already had an appetizer. You're about to be the main course.

CHAZAN:

Look, I appreciate you're hungry. And maybe I was remiss in not signing the Wilderness Society petition. But if you let me go, I promise some day I'll help you. I will. I swear on the Bible, the Koran, the Gospels, the Kama Sutra, whatever. And besides *(points)* see that young deer over there that's caught in the thicket? I'm old and tough. He'd make a much tastier dinner than I would.

NARRATOR:

The lion looked and sure enough, there was a deer caught in the thicket. He turned back to the chazan and said in amazement...

LION:

Chazza...

CHAZAN:

That's chazani!

LION:

Dear me, your prayers sure got answered fast. Okay, this time I'll let you go with a warning. But next time you may not be so lucky. And, by the way, stop with the silly nonsense about you, a puny little chazan, helping me, the mighty king of the forest. No way. It'll never happen.

NARRATOR:

The lion, whose ability to predict the future was highly suspect since it was well known that he had invested heavily in Enron and Global Crossing, released his victim. The chazan thanked the lion and took to her heels, and likely to arrive barely in time for Aleynu, she took a short cut. Suddenly, she heard a familiar blood-curdling roar. Followed by another. And another. Only somehow, to the chazan's finely-turned ears, these roars sounded different.

CHAZAN:

Hmm, that's not a hungry roar. That's a courtship roar. That's a troubled S.O.S.-type roar. My friend, Ari, is in trouble. Despite the fact that he dismissed me as a fool and a braggart, I must keep my promise and help him.

NARRATOR:

The chazan raced through the forest, tripping on roots and scratched by undergrowth, until, at last, she found the lion trapped in a snare, fighting fiercely to break loose. But the more he struggled, the tighter the noose held him. When the hunters arrived, it would be final curtain for "The Lion King."

CHAZAN:

Your majesty, I'm here to help you escape. You laughed at me once, but now, you'll see, I'll make sure it wasn't your last laugh.

NARRATOR:

Suiting the action to her words, the chazan raised her voice in song. She began with "do re mi" at middle C and raised her voice higher, higher, ever higher. Three octaves later, goblets began snapping in the hands of Eskimos

in Saskatchewan and President Bush in the middle of a champagne toast at a Legal Defense Fundraiser for the honest, dedicated, and unfairly maligned, and passionately patriotic accountants of Arthur Andersen.

CHAZAN:

I haven't worked so hard since I auditioned for Anshe Chesed. But one more high note should do it. (Takes final deep breath and hits her highest note.)

"I'm tryin', I'm tryin',

I've got to free the lion.

My voice has great timbre,

I'll use it to free Simba.

If I don't get him loose it's true

He'll wind up working in a zoo

A fate that's surely worse than death

So here comes freedom's final breath!

NARRATOR:

And that, did it. The stout rope binding the lion quivered, trembled, and finally snapped. The grateful but embarrassed lion gave the chazan a hug and high-tailed into the forest where subsequently he successfully auditioned for and joined a road company of "The Lion King." So...there is, of course, a moral to this Aesop's Fable. (to audience) Would you like to guess what it is? (audience guesses or not) Well, the real moral to this story is, of course, "If you make a promise to the king of the beasts, you better not be lion."

SCENE 7: Fellowship of the Ring

(PEABODY and SHERMAN enter.)

SHERMAN:

Gee, Mr. Peabody, we never got to see what happened to Esther after she met with Mordechai. How do you suppose she handled the crisis?

PEABODY:

(clipped, almost British academic cadence) Sherman, quantum physics teaches us that the addition of observers to an event changes the information incorporated in that event.

SHERMAN:

You mean ...

PEABODY:

Yes, we inadvertently changed the story of the Megillah by dragging in story lines from other books.

SHERMAN:

Golly, Mr. Peabody, how can we be sure that everything will work out in the end, as it does every year?

PEABODY:

I suggest we go back a bit further in the story, to Haman's audience with the King, and be prepared to intervene as the opportunity arises.

(PEABODY and SHERMAN push dials, activate way-back machine, step to rear. ACHASHVERUS, wearing crown, enters, takes throne. HAMAN enters.)

ACHASHVERUS:

Ah Haman! You've been gone a long time!

HAMAN:

Yes, Your Majesty, I have been conducting an inspection throughout the many provinces of Your Majesty's kingdom, as instructed.

ACHASHVERUS:
So tell me, how are things in my border provinces?

HAMAN:
Well, as Your Majesty knows, in the bor-dor there were rumors of stirrings in Mordor. So with the thane of Cawdor I took a Gondor to check with the witch of Ein-Dor in Gondor.

SHERMAN:
That must have been a door-to-door inspection.

HAMAN:
The witch was weird, the thane was wired, but the worries were but a false alarm.

ACHASHVERUS:
You do-o-o-n't say. And in the North, at the Lonely Mountain, is the terrible dragon Smaug still casting a smog of fear over the area?

HAMAN:
The great Smaug had ingested a little smack, and was smitten by a smart smasher. End of problem.

ACHASHVERUS:
You do-o-o-n't say. And in the happy province of the Shire, does Bilbo Bagins still tell his tall tales?

HAMAN:
The bibulous Bagins bitches a bit that the boodle he bagged has been basically blown.

ACHASHVERUS:
You do-o-o-n't say. Well, is there any problem you wish to bring to our attention?

HAMAN:
As a matter of fact... *(draws himself up and declaims – must be memorized!)* There is a certain people, scattered and dispersed among the other peoples in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those of any other people and who do not obey the king's laws; and it is not in Your Majesty's interest to tolerate them. If it pleases Your Majesty, let an edict be drawn for their destruction, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the stewards for deposit in the royal treasury. *(bows to audience)*

ACHASHVERUS:
(waits for boos/hisses to die down) Hmm, 10,000 talents. I could put on quite a talent show with that kind of money. OK, Haman, I'll give you my signet ring... *(takes off and holds up ring)*

HAMAN:
(aside to audience) At last!! The true Ring of Power! *(Cut lights.)*

AMPLIFIED BASS VOICE:
(slowly, darkly, with growing passion)

Three Rings for Reform Jews, of obligation relieved,
Seven for the Seminary in its structures of stone,
Nine for the Orthodox, determined to believe,

One for the Dark Chief Rabbi, on his dark chief throne,
In the Land of Shushan where the shadows lie,
One ring to rule them all, one ring to find them

One ring to bring them all, and in the darkness bind them
In the Land of Shushan where the shadows lie.

(Sound of ring hitting stone, rolling.)

HAMAN: No-o-o-o-o-oh!!! My precious, my precious, it has rolled into the sewer!

Scene 8: Fellowship of the Ring

(Sign is put on easel: Fellowship of the Ring. Players comes onstage. MORDECHAI the Grey is tall and wears a wizard's getup, with staff. ESTHER and VASHTI are hobbits, are barefoot and have hairy feet. GIMLI is a dwarf and holds an ax. LEGOLAS is an elf has a blond wig and bow. ARAGORN and BOROMIR have tunics and kilts, and carry swords.)

MORDECHAI:

We are gathered. Some of us have been pursued by orcs, others by balrogs, still others by Special Forces of the Dark One.

BOROMIR:

The Special Forces! They veil their features under heavy cowls, they blend in with the natives as they thunder on their black horses, and with their laser target-spotters they spread destruction wherever they point.

ARAGORN:

Air traffic is in turmoil. No one can foretell when one will arrive, or how many hours early to show up at the airport.

GIMLI:

And there is no respect for one's person! I, Gimli ben Gloin, was strip-searched! They took me for a Taliban, just because my ax set off a metal detector. Do they stop the Sikhs from traveling with their ceremonial knives? No! But everyone dumps on a dwarf!

LEGOLAS:

And this sudden attention to footwear! Though I don't suppose that you Hobbits were stopped by the shoe police? (Esther show off hairy, bare foot)

VASHTI:

No, but the bomb-sniffing dog licked off all of my toe-nail polish.

BOROMIR:

I, Boromir, have traveled all the way from Kaffirstan, the easternmost province in the Empire. We of the Northern Alliance are sorely tried resisting the hordes of the Dark One, O'Hamah bin Hamin-dahtha. We need assistance before the dark masses gather against us.

VASHTI:

I thought his name was Voidemort (everyone clap their hands to their ears, and say "Sh-h-h").

ESTHER:

No, that's the other Dark One. Vashti, you've got to keep your plot lines separate.

VASHTI:

You mean that we're not at Hogwarts School for Wizardry?

ESTHER:

We're hobbits, not witches! And don't try any spells - everything is darker in this story. You might invoke the mother of all Dark Arts teachers by mistake, or even (notices all the males staring at them, trails off) kill off J.K. Rowling.

MORDECHAI:

(staring the hobbits into silence) And some of us come from sunnier lands, where the shadow of the Enemy is barely felt.

LEGOLAS:

Yes, I am Legolas, prince of Legoland. We elves are a happy race, but the danger of the Ring of Power threatens to tear apart even our interlocking dwellings.

ESTHER: Well, we of the Shire live joyously – dancing, eating watermelons, putting on coon shows ... and then my uncle Mordechai the Grey got hold of this ring.

GIMLI: That ring was forged in ancient times, in the fiery furnace of Nimrod, when the world was young and anti-Semitism meant beating up on Avram. Nimrod intended the ring to control the destiny of the Jews.

MORDECHAI: When Nimrod met his death in a hunting accident –

ARAGORN: He was gored by the shor ha-bor – in Bora Bora.

MORDECHAI: ... the ring passed into the hands of Ogga-Bogga, king of Bashan. Og, of course, was one of the giants, and fortunately could never fit the ring on his finger.

BOROMIR: Og passed it to his grandson, Goliath, who used it in a frightfully Phillistine fashion to frame the Phoenician fatwa against monotheists. But when David, in single combat, turned Goliath into a beetle, the ring passed into Israeliite hands.

LEGOLAS: And, after the churban, to the baleful Babylonians and eventually the powerful Persians.

ESTHER: *(the five males look eagerly at Esther, to see if she understands. She pauses, looks them around)* You d-o-o-n't say!

MORDECHAI: It is true. But the ring was lost, just as the Evil One, O'Haman bin Ladin-data was about to gain control. I provoked the Sanhedrin, and the Golem we created was able to retrieve it. But the Evil One seeks it and has sent out scads and scads of Qa-eda minions to find it.

LEGOLAS: And minyans and minyans of Qa-eda cads to bind it!

VASHTI: *(Nervously)* Esther, I'm getting the picture. We've got to get out of here!

GIMLI: Nay, more important than our safety, the One Ring must be returned to the fiery furnace in which it was forged, and thereby destroyed.

ARAGORN: Fortunately, Nimrod's furnace is still fiery and was recently temperature-tested by three of Mordechai's boys.

VASHTI: I've got an ideall *(Pause, as all stare at her)* You be the Beaters, you be the Chasers, I'll be the Keeper ...

ESTHER: *(breaks in, hurriedly)* Sithering Ravenclaws, Vashti, I told you to keep the plot-lines clear! We're talking Qa-eda, not Quiditch!

GIMLI:
(*soothingly*) Esther, you and your faithful friend Vash! Gamgee-'tovah have already acted bravely, far beyond what those of your size, gender and footwear could have been called upon.

LEGOLAS:
But someone must carry the One Ring to Shushan and cast it into the flaming furnace, and soon. The Evil One has set a date for his onslaught! (ALL look at each other in embarrassment – no one wants to volunteer.)

ESTHER:
OK, I guess it has to be me. Surprise, surprise.

BOROMIR:
And I will join you in this perilous passage! (ALL chime in: "And I!")

MORDECHAI:
And we have only three days to get there, fast!
(sings, to "We're off to see the Wizard")
We're off to melt the One Ring
The Ring that was passed on to Og

ARAGORN:
It is a thing, that terrible Ring
That was better off left in a bog

VASHTI:
If ever a singular Ring there was
This sinister bauble is One because

ALL:
Because, because, because, because, because,

BOROMIR:
Because it's the target of Haman the scuz!

ALL: (pause for laughter)
We're off to melt the One Ring,
To keep it from Haman the scuz!
(ALL exit)

T A R G E T

Finale: (Sung to the tune of "The Beverly Hillbillies")

Well that was our Purim spiel, it wasn't very long
Not a lot of jokes, not a lot of songs

As we explained, we just weren't in the mood
But it had a saving grace -- it wasn't very crude

Dirty, that is
Full of swear words
Nivul peh

We read the megillah and we had a bit of fun
Mordechai was honored, Haman was undone
Another thing about the evening that was really great --
You'll all get home before it gets too late
For a schoolnight, that is
A weekday eve
Besides, we're gettin' old

So go on home and have yourselves a beer
We'll all get together again this time next year
If you walk or take a taxi, the subway or your car
Just remember this -- be happy-y, it's Adar!

'Bye y'all!

