
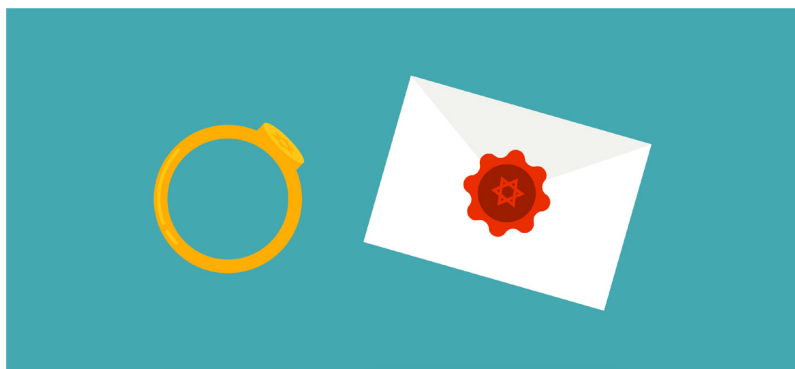


# Strong Like Esther





It was said that King Ahasuaerus' rule extended over 127 lands, and that his wife Esther was the most beautiful woman in all the kingdom. Esther was doubly blessed: Not just with unmatched beauty, which had earned the king's favor, but also with great intelligence. But Esther had a secret. She was a Jew living in the palace of the Persian king.



Now the king had a wicked advisor named Haman. Haman decided that all the Jews of Persia would be rounded up and slaughtered: men, women, and children alike. The proclamation was sent to all the king's lands, sealed in wax with the royal signet ring. Esther's uncle Mordechai implored her to intervene. Esther despaired. What would happen to her once she revealed her identity? Besides, no one was allowed to approach the king without being summoned, upon pain of death. It was well known he had severely punished his previous wife for such breach of etiquette.

Esther looked at herself in a hand mirror. Swathed in silks hemmed in gold thread, her lips rouged and her eyes rimmed in kohl, she did look beautiful — every bit the majestic queen. If she kept silent, a life of rosewater-scented comfort might be hers forever. But as she looked in the mirror, she saw a future in which she remained silent. With every beat of her heart, her reflection grew uglier and uglier. She was horrified by this vision of the future.



Then she took a deep breath, looked more closely into the mirror, and recognized herself again. She saw who she really was, and knew what she had to do. They say that never did Esther look more regal than in that decisive moment, as she squared her shoulders, tilted up her chin, and filled with a sense of calm.

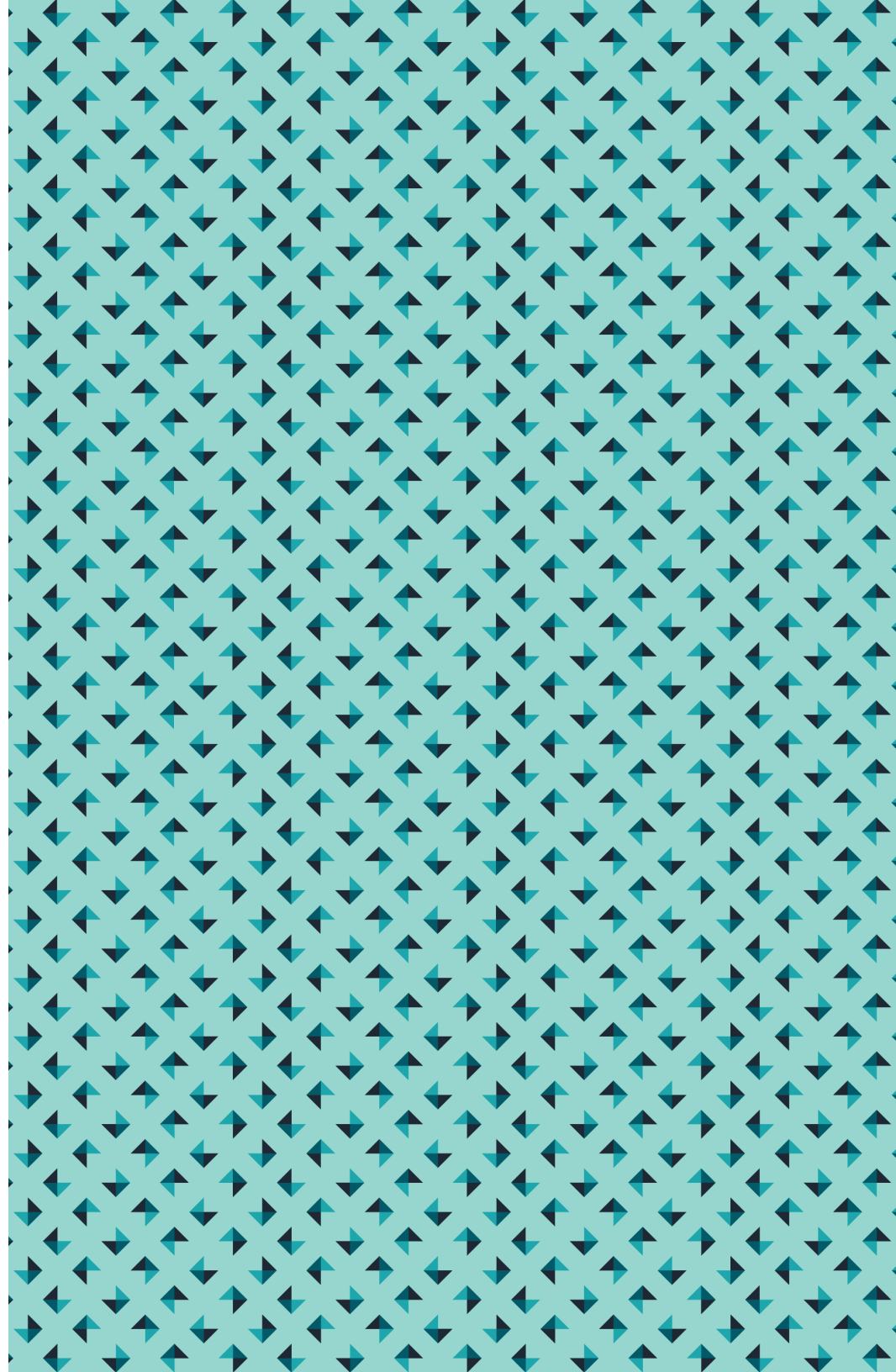
*Esther entered  
King Ahasuaerus'  
chambers  
uninvited, her  
head held high.  
She revealed her  
Jewish identity,  
exposed Haman's  
plan and saved the  
Persian Jews.*

To this day, for her moral character, Queen Esther is remembered as among the greatest heroes of Jewish history, and celebrated with wine, merriment and noisemaking on Purim, the most joyous day of the Jewish year.





When you are strong, that strength benefits not only yourself, but the entire community. One person's courageous acts can truly change the world.





## **Jewish Federation** of Greater Philadelphia

The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia mobilizes financial and volunteer resources to address the communities' most critical priorities locally, in Israel and around the world.

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