

YOUTH  ALIVE


Get ready to be
A QUEEN



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ou're probably familiar with the phrase "to walk in someone else's shoes". And I'm sure you've wanted to be in someone else's shoes at least once in your life. How many times did you wish you had your classmate's naturally wavy hair? Or your best friend's blue eyes? Or your neighbor's fancy dress, even if you were a completely different size? Why is it that someone else seems to be Cinderella? The truth is Cinderella was never anything else but a poor, simple and disregarded girl walking in her own "shoes". These shoes were, however, the perfect fit for her and no-one else was able to walk in them.

The fact that she was able to become a princess shows that we can also become the queens we're meant to be - by wearing the right "shoes" for us.



What do you think a queen looks like? What are some of the essential traits you associate with a queen, or qualities that no queen should be without? Do you also dream about being regarded and appreciated as a queen? Would you like to be the queen of your class, of your social group, of your family? Would you, later on, like to become the queen of your household and of the church you belong to? Did you know that's possible?

The Holy Scripture welcomes us into the lives of some remarkable queens, teaching us about their roles and responsibilities. This is how a queen's life should be.

The banished QUEEN



Imagine you're dating the boy of your dreams! Although he doesn't share your religious views, he is the coolest, most handsome, kindest and most polite boy in your school. All the girls dream about him and all the boys want to be his best friend. You've been dreaming about being his girlfriend for years, planned it all out, tried to get his attention countless ways, and finally you two are together. And of course, he's also very proud of you and eager to show you off to all his friends.

So imagine you've been dating the boy of your dreams for a couple of months, and he invites you to a party at his place while his parents are out of town. Since he's well off, you know this will be a huge party, for all his friends. There will be crazy music, skimpy fashion, and most likely alcoholic beverages that you'd rather avoid. This will be his chance to flaunt you to everyone. Of course, you could choose not to dance or consume any snacks or drinks you don't want to, but you would still be involved in actions that may not live up to your

moral standards.

What will you choose? Will you attend this party as a sign of respect for him, although you know very well you might end up making some compromises? Or will you refuse his invitation, even if that threatens your entire relationship?

Let's look at Vashti. The First Lady of the Empire, she finds herself in a similarly complicated situation. We are not told how long she has struggled to reach the "throne", but undoubtedly becoming the queen of the largest kingdom at the time was a place coveted by any young woman. After all her work to win over the heart and love of the most distinguished man, when the whole world becomes hers, she is forced to either give in or give up everything... Only three years after becoming the most powerful woman in the empire and achieving her lifelong dream, Vashti is dragged into compromise.

How easily would you give up on your biggest dream in her place?

Especially when your biggest decision is presented in the most tempting of circumstances. Don't think this was easy:

“ *There were white and blue linen curtains fastened with cords of fine linen and purple on silver rods and marble pillars; and the couches were of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black marble. And they served drinks in golden vessels, each vessel being different from the other, with royal wine in abundance, according to the generosity of the king.* ”

(Esther 1: 6-7)

This is the seductive setting Queen Vashti is called into so the King can “show the peoples and the princes her beauty, for she was lovely to look at”. Imagine that - the coolest guy in the land wants to show off your beauty to all his friends! It would be really silly to refuse such an opportunity, right? After struggling for years to become such an unparalleled beauty and to finally have the opportunity to dazzle everyone with your charm ... would you say no to all that?

That is exactly what Vashti did:

“ *But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command.*

(Esther 1:12) ”

At the risk of being banished! Why would she?

She was the highest queen of the time, she reigned from the most envied throne in the empire, and sat beside the most powerful man. She was promised a lifetime of fame, wealth, appreciation, so why would she throw all of that away? Just to become a real Queen?

Let's examine her motivations.

The custom of those times was that women could not be seen by any men, except by the eunuchs that took care of their chambers, and by their husbands once they were married. No other man was allowed to see a woman who was not completely

covered (including her face). In any other circumstances, it would have been unthinkable to suggest that Vashti reveal her beautiful face to all the noblemen. The queen knew that her husband was influenced by all the food and alcohol he had consumed when he made his request. By complying with his command, she would in fact be bringing dishonor not just to herself and her husband, but to the entire royal house. So she made the difficult choice of abiding by the honor custom and refusing her husband.

Can you imagine what all those men who had been drinking and partying with the king for seven days must have thought?

“ *On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded ... to bring Queen Vashti before the king* ”

(Esther 1:10-11)

The other men must have been equally ‘wasted’ from the king’s wine! Just think of how disinhibited they would have been after seven days of feasting away from their wives (as the queen Vashti had prepared a separate feast for the women)! How purely would they have looked upon her delicate and noble beauty? And how terribly tainted would the queen’s reputation become after revealing her face to all these drunk men?

So Vashti chooses the behavior of a real Queen and maintains her noble attitude, even if it means losing her royal title.

Never forget, my dear, that the defining qualities of a real Queen are not the title or the throne, but her manners, her noble actions and a royal attitude. Being the mayor's doctor or coming from a rich family will not make you a true queen -- only the way you choose to act and present yourself.

1. Vashti doesn't allow herself to go to a setting that's inappropriate for a Queen and thus tarnish her crown.

Vashti refused to be part of any unfit space, occasion or setting. Will you, Miss Universe, "First Lady" in your world, choose the less honorable path? Just for a crazy house party? Remember the motivation for the queen's punishment:

“
*For the queen's conduct
will become known to all the
women... This very day the Persian and
Median women of the nobility who have
heard about the queen's conduct will respond to
all the king's nobles in the same way. There will
be no end of disrespect and discord.*

(Esther 1: 17-18)

Of course, these consequences were presented in a negative light, but what if your actions would lead to real positive change? What if your choices influenced your girlfriends and classmates and neighbors to do the same? What if your path inspired girls from all around to make changes in their lives that bring them closer to God?

“

*...all the women will
respect their husbands, from the
least to the greatest...*

”

Never doubt the impact of your actions. The smallest gesture, your most private choice, they are all revealed by your behavior and can trigger a sequence of events far exceeding your conscious circle of influence. If you start dressing more modestly, your roommate might also start adjusting her outfits. Your choices in your romantic relationships will inspire tens, if not hundreds of other girls dreaming about their own Prince Charming. Because of you someday girls might start to be more aware of their own choices in their lives. That's the legacy of a true Queen!

2. The Queen's moral dignity won't permit her to provoke inappropriate thoughts and desires among the men around her.

She is aware that the king's guests are at their weakest and that they would easily allow immoral thoughts in their minds upon seeing her. So she decides to prevent any embarrassment. Do you also dream about being liked and appreciated by boys? There's nothing wrong with that, but remember this:

“ *Let a young man seek
one to stand by his side who is
fitted to bear her share of life's burdens,
one whose influence will ennoble and refine
him, and who will make him happy in her love.*

(Ministry of Healing, p.359) ”

Maybe you're thinking Vashti was on the losing side, despite her morality, as she was a banished queen. Let's take a look at the next chapter: