

it is not exactly a beauty contest although that element is certainly in the whole picture.

2:5....Here we meet Mordecai. He is a Jew...probably a third generation captivity person. He is in the palace...the idea is that he has some sort of official status there but not one that is high!

2:6....the facts of the captivity are etched. Note it is not Mordecai <sup>only</sup> ~~himself~~ who was transported but his family and he is still there.

2:7....We learn that Esther is his cousin, "his uncle's daughter". Her Hebrew name is Hadassah...the myrtle tree. She has no family but was taken by Mordecai when her father and mother died. She has been raised by him and she is fair and beautiful.

2:8....Esther is brought to the king's house...we do not read that she ran there eagerly or anything like that...simply that as a beautiful maiden she was brought there. These monarchs did not do a lot of wooing...they did a lot more grabbing and taking. With the other women she is placed under the administration of Hege.

2:9....She quickly becomes the preference of Hege who gives to her a group of maidens (7) to minister to her and he provides whatever she needs for her sustenance giving her the best place in the house. Do you think this is accidental?

2:10...But he does not know she is Jewish...Mordecai had told her to keep mum about that...why? Well...

2:11...Mordecai does not quit on the matter of his care for Esther and he walks about the court of the women's house every day, learning what he can of his cousin's destiny.

2:12...The preparation period for these women...to make sure they are pure and fit for the eyes of the king, is a period of 1 year....obviously no one was in a big hurry and the suspense facing Mordecai must have been awful

2:13...After this year the maidens would be sent before the king...they had full choice of cosmetics and whatever other things they might have thought and advantage in seeing the king.

2:14...She went to his presence in the evening, returned to the house of the women in the morning and she never saw the king again unless he called for her by