

Esther Casting List and Notes

Cast size 13 –40+

The minimum cast size is 13 with actors playing multiple roles. There are up to 23 featured roles with significant “moments” (listed below). There are also a flexible number of ensemble roles that involve speaking, solo singing lines, and dancing.

LEAD:

ESTHER: Female, appears 18-late 20s. A Jewish orphan, living in exile. She is searching for validation and believes that she will find it at the palace. She is chosen to be queen because of her beauty and ability to play by the rules. Later in life she discovers enormous strength and bravery when she is put to the test. Requires an excellent actor and singer, with an honest, good sense of humor and a strong dramatic range. Solos include “Just Beyond the Wall,” “Rest of My Life,” and “The Prayer Parts 1 and 2.” Mezzo-soprano.

XERXES: Male, appears late 20s - 30s. King of Persia. Thinks of himself as the most handsome, charming man in the world. Although dangerously powerful and childish, he is honest and lovable. He grows over the course of the show and begins to show signs of a good leader and decent human being. Requires a very physical, bold comedic actor. Some singing required (solo lines could be spoken on the beat if necessary). Partial solos in “Persia,” “Rest of My Life,” and “The Toast.” Tenor.

HAMAN: Male, appears 30s-40s. King Xerxes' chief advisor and best friend. He is a popular politician who has made his way by flattery and deceit. While somewhat likable on the outside, he eventually shows his true colors: he is power hungry, blood thirsty, and full of hatred for anyone who stands in his way. Requires an excellent actor and singer with strong dramatic range. Solos include “Just Beyond the Wall,” “I Made It,” and “Mordecai!” Baritone/Tenor.

PRINCIPAL:

MEMUCAN: Male, appears 20s-40s. Energetic and optimistic narrator of the story, advisor to Xerxes, and leader of the Stooges. He has an intense dislike for Haman that is fueled by various power plays. Strong sense of duty. Could double as the Beauty Queen HOST. Requires great command of the stage and comedic chops, along with some singing. This role could also be played by a female dressed as a male. Soloist in “Beauty Queen Invitation,” (this could be sung by a STOOGE instead) and “The Plot” (fast speaking with the beat) Baritone.

MORDECAI: Male, appears late 40s-60s. Esther's father figure. Warm, caring, and a little blunt. Doesn't care what people think about him. Bold and unafraid to stand up to Haman. Requires a strong actor with dramatic range and some singing. Soloist in “Mordecai's Promised Life” and “The Prayer Part 2.” Bass/Baritone.

TALA: Female, appears 18 - 25. A sweet, simple (and somewhat slow) palace employee who becomes Esther's friend and confidant. Honest, optimistic, loyal, and very funny. Requires great comedic timing. Partial solos in “The Prayer Parts 1 and 2” and “The Toast.” Mezzo-Soprano.

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VASHTI: Female, appears 20's - 30's. Neurotic Queen of Persia. Full of confidence and dignity. Big voice and personality. Could double as Zeresh. Requires a strong singer with comedic range. Big solo in "Vashti's Lament." Alto/Belter.

ZERESH: Female, appears 20s - late 30s. Haman's wife. Calculating and manipulative, but she can paste on a smile when it's beneficial. Always playing a game of some kind. Requires a strong actor with dramatic range and comedic timing (singing not required).

DARIA: Beauty Queen Contestant with almost clownish looking makeup, clothing, and hair. She is bold and lacks all self-awareness. Requires a bold comedic actor. Sings solo lines in "Beauty Queen" (could sing them as a comedically "bad singer"). Mezzo/Belter.

AGATHA: BQ Contestant. She is clearly an older woman (even though she claims to be young), maybe 75. Hunched with a cane, ideally has a southern accent. Very sour and crotchety. Ringleader. Requires a bold comedic actor. Sings solo lines in "Beauty Queen." Mezzo/Belter.

PARISA: BQ Contestant. Can't contain her excitement. Loud and a bit annoying. Tension (from excitement) is almost always bursting through every bone of her body. Requires a bold comedic actor. Sings solo lines in "Beauty Queen." Mezzo/Belter.

FEATURED ROLES:

HOST: Male or Female, host of beauty queen competition. Energetic, sarcastic, wears a smile in the worst of situations. Should be played by an actor with great comedic timing (singing not required). Role can be doubled with the role of Memucan.

HEGAI: Male or female "trainer" in the beauty queen competition. Tries to intimidate contestants and typically fails. Could be played like a military sergeant. Solo speaking on the beat (not sung) in "Beauty Queen."

TERESH: A male character (could be played by a female), he is the lead henchman in the plot to kill Xerxes. He has more brains than Bigthan, but he's still not the sharpest tool in the shed. Solo lines (mostly spoken on the beat) in "The Plot." Baritone/bass.

BIGTHAN: A male character (could be played by a female), utterly stupid, part of plot to kill the king. Solo lines (mostly spoken on the beat) in "The Plot." Baritone/bass.

THE STOOGES: A group of (up to) 7 advisors to King Xerxes. Male characters, but could include females dressed as men. Ideally played by actors skilled in improvisation and physical comedy. Some singing and dancing required (particularly in "Mordecai!")

CRABBY: Female, appears late 50s - 80's. A crotchety, miserable woman. Always looking for a fight or a juicy piece of gossip.

ENSEMBLE ROLES: Various small features including an Innocent Bystander, Vashti's ladies/dancers, featured townspeople in "Ordinary Day," "Beauty Queen" contestants...

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SMALLER CAST NOTES:

If using a cast of 13-22, certain actors can play multiple roles, including the following options:

- **Option 1 (male or female):** one actor plays MEMUCAN and HOST.
- **Option 2 (male or female):** one actor plays HOST and BIGTHAN or TERESH. This actor could also play a STOOGE and a featured townspeople in “Ordinary Day.”
- **Option 3 (female):** one actor plays VASHTI and ZERESH. This actor could also play a STOOGE (in some scenes), CRABBY, and a featured townspeople in “Ordinary Day.”
- **Option 4 (female):** one actor plays VASHTI and either DARIA, AGATHA, or PARISA. This actor could also play a STOOGE (in some scenes), CRABBY, and a featured townspeople in “Ordinary Day.”
- **Option 5 (male or female):** HEGAI also plays BIGTHAN or TERESH. This actor could also play a STOOGE, CRABBY (if female), and a featured townspeople in “Ordinary Day.”
- **STOOGES** can double with featured ensemble speaking roles in “Ordinary Day.” If female, they can double as Vashti’s ladies/dancers (potentially with a quick costume change) and Beauty Queen contestants/soloists.
- **“BEAUTY QUEEN”** solos can all be sung by Daria, Agatha, and Parisa (if necessary).

CASTING NOTES:

- Roles that require a very strong singer: Esther, Haman, and Vashti.
- Roles that require a very strong singer and dramatic actor: Esther, Haman.
- Roles that require a strong comedic actor (with some singing/musicality): Xerxes, Memucan, Tala, Daria, Agatha, Parisa. Xerxes/Memucan/Daria/Agatha/Parisa can be character singers – a “pretty” voice is not necessary. A sweet singing voice is ideal for Tala (for her solos in “The Prayer”), but not absolutely necessary.
- Roles that require a strong dramatic actor: Mordecai, Zeresh. If Mordecai is not a strong singer, his lines can be somewhat spoken on the beat in “Mordecai’s Promised Life” (a very short song). Tala could cover Mordecai’s singing solos in “The Prayer Part 2.”