

Esther 2:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.

Analysis

Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. When each maiden's appointed time came, she could request whatever she wished (kol asher tomar, כָּל אֲשֶׁר-תָּמַר) to accompany her—jewelry, cosmetics, perfumes, clothing—to maximize her attractiveness and chances of pleasing the king. This detail highlights the competitive nature of the selection and the candidates' limited agency: they could choose accessories, but not whether to participate or when to appear. The movement "out of the house of the women unto the king's house" emphasizes the transition from preparation to decisive encounter. For most candidates, this would be their only night with the king before permanent assignment to the concubines' quarters. Everything depended on that single opportunity.

Historical Context

The freedom to choose any desired items from the royal treasury demonstrates Persian imperial generosity and abundance. Candidates could select from elaborate jewelry, luxurious fabrics, exotic perfumes, and other precious items—whatever they believed would most please the king. This detail also reveals the candidates' vulnerability: they had to guess the king's preferences without knowing him personally. Most would choose elaborate adornments, believing more luxury meant greater appeal. Esther's contrasting simplicity (v. 15)—accepting

