

פרק ב – Esther's Introduction and Character

1. Read through פרק ב', פסוקים א-ז. How is אסתר introduced? Who is introduced first here, and which character is actually important for the story in פרק ב? What is significant about this introduction? How does this introduction influence and inform the reader's initial impression of אסתר?
2. The description, "וְהַנְעִרָה יָפֶת-תֹּאֵר וְטוֹבֵת מְרֻאָה" (ב:ז), is oddly placed between two facts related to Esther's familial status. This information is the kind that is often given when female characters are introduced, but we would likely expect it to be given in relation to Esther's entrance into the harem. What then is the significance of it being included here? How does it shape her identity?
3. אסתר is introduced with both her Hebrew and Persian names. Recall, or scan through the remainder of מגילת אסתר, and note what she is called for the rest of the story.

See specifically פרק ט, כט. What is she called there? Why is this significant? What does it say about her position vis-à-vis the Jewish community at that point in the story?