VASHTI
A classic commentary explains her reluctance by saying that the King asked her to appear "wearing only her crown," though that's not in the original text. The King is horrified at her refusal and consults his adviser, who points out that if Vashti is punished, all the women of the kingdom will get the wrong idea and begin to look down on their husbands. So Queen Vashti gets booted out of the castle, and for good measure, the King sends out a decree that man is the master of the home.

Vashti's story doesn't end in triumph -- she was a few thousand years before her time, perhaps -- but I have admire the woman's principles.

ESTHER
As instructed by her uncle Mordechai, Queen Esther never reveals her Jewish roots. Some time later, Esther finds out that her people are in danger: The King's evil adviser Haman, infuriated by Mordechai's refusal to bow down to him, has recommended that the king kill all the Jews. Mordechai calls upon Esther to help, sending her a pointed message that if the massacre occurs, she shouldn't expect to be spared, and perhaps this was the very reason she had risen to such a position of power.

Despite the risks (after all, her husband has already shown himself to be intolerant of uppity wives) Queen Esther embarks on a complicated diplomatic effort. Through a series of planned feasts, subtle hints and well-timed revelations, she convinces the King to rescind his decree. She saves her people, and the evil Haman is punished.

REBECCA
Who again bucks convention and what society expects and does what is best for the Jewish people – helping Jacob deceive Isaac – because she knows that the future of the tribe of the Jewish people will be in the 'people of the tent' not the 'people of the sword' as Esau is known. Thus she establishes the biblical precedent for the wife to stand up to her husband and indeed you could draw a straight line from this moment to the rabbinic principle that the woman is responsible for the mikdash ma'at the sanctuary of the home.