

HERCULES

By Craig Sodaro

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Modern language and loads of humor make this version of the Greek tale one that today's audience is sure to enjoy. Hercules' girlfriend, Megara, has been poisoned by a jealous Hera and now he must complete eight tasks for Hera or lose Megara's love forever.

The problem is, Hercules is just a human young man. It doesn't look as if he will be performing any great feats of strength or act particularly clever. But in the end he humbles the cocky Stymphalian birds, gets the best of the shady Arcadian stag, resists the Erymanthian Bore, cleans up King Augeus' act and gives each of the Hydra's heads a new hairdo.

Hercules is reunited with Megara in the end, of course, since no force can resist true love for very long!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(45 speaking parts, minimum 7 M, 14 W)

ZEUS: Head of the gods.
HERA: His second wife.
HARPIE ONE: Zeus's helper.
HARPIE TWO: Another.
HERCULES: Zeus's mortal son.
MEDUSA: With a head full of snakes.
CHORUS MEMBERS 1 - 3: They speak in rhyme.
MEGARA: Waitress at the Olympic Cafe.
NIMEAN LION: A cowardly fellow.
MOUSE: With an attitude.
STYMPHALIAN BIRDS 1 - 3: Big birds with attitudes.
ARCADIAN STAG: The best salesman in Athens.
LADIES 1 - 2: Victims of the Bore.
ERYMANTHIAN BORE: A non-stop talker.
HANNAH HESPERIDE: A teenager.
HESTER HESPERIDE: Her teenage sister.
HILLARY HESPERIDE: The youngest sister.
ATLAS: Their father who carries the world.
KING AUGEUS: A slob.
HORSES 1- 4: His horses.
QUEEN: Augeus' long-suffering wife.
ARIADNE: Consort to Hippolyta.
HIPPOLYTA: Amazon queen and aerobics instructor from hell.
GERUNDA: An Amazon guard.
CASSANDRA: Amazon who hates aerobics.
AMAZONS: Tribe of health-conscious women.
BEAUTICIAN: One busy lady.
HYDRA HEADS 1-9: Creature with a good head--er, heads on her shoulders.
DELIVERY BOY (or Girl): Brings salad fixings.
CRETAN BULL: A sophisticated date.

NOTE: *Doubling is possible and more chorus members may be added. It might also be a good idea to print the poem of what Hercules must achieve (p. 15) in your program.*

SETTING

A single representational set is all that's needed. A ladder with a cardboard facade of a mountain at CS serves as Mt. Olympus. Zeus' thunderbolts and snow can be stored in a pocket attached UPS side of ladder. A few clouds may also be included. At SR and SL are two pillars and a bench. These items may then be moved to various points on stage to represent different scenes.

PROPS

ZEUS: Glittering thunderbolts, cane, pen, binoculars or telescope, "snow."
HERA: Small bell, list.
HARPIES: Length of fabric representing snow, small bench.
MEDUSA: Small spray perfume bottle, business card.
MEGARA: Ring.
HERCULES: Radishes, bag, helmet, gag, mask, latex gloves, broom, length of string, bottles, wire, plastic bag.
HESPERIDES: Three golden apples.
LION: Wooden stake, hammer.
MOUSE: Glasses.
ARCADIAN STAG: Two tickets, antlers.
BORE: Rope.
LADIES 1 and 2: Hospital face masks, spray perfume bottle.
ATLAS: Large globe.
KING AUGEUS: Bent pop cans, chips.
FISH: Fabric representing river.
QUEEN: Mask.
ARIADNE: Shield and sword.
HIPPOLYTA: "Power" belt.
GERUNDA: Spear.
DELIVERY BOY: Large salad.
BULL: Bell.

SOUND EFFECTS

Thunder, knocking, rushing water, bouncy aerobic music, etc.

ACT I

(AT RISE: The stage is empty. But after a moment, ZEUS races on SL, looks about nervously.)

ZEUS: Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I must find someplace to—*(HE moves to ladder.)* Of course! She'll never be able to reach me at the top of Mt. Olympus! *(HE climbs the ladder almost to the top.)*

HERA: *(Off SL)* Zeus! You low-down, measly worm!

ZEUS: Too bad I still have to hear her!

(HERA storms on SL.)

HERA: Where is he?! I don't care if he is the top banana! He's not going to make a monkey out of me! Zeus?! *(SHE spies ZEUS on the ladder.)* So THERE you are!

ZEUS: Hello, Hera honey.

HERA: Don't you "Hera honey" me! Get down off that mountain and take your medicine like a man!

ZEUS: *(Pouting)* No!

HERA: Zeus!

ZEUS: I'm NOT a man! I'm a god—who doesn't need any medicine.

HERA: Then I'm coming up to get you!

ZEUS: You wouldn't dare!

HERA: Oh, wouldn't I?

ZEUS: My Harpies won't let you up here! The top of Mt. Olympus is my spot. No mortals, no other gods are allowed. So there!

HERA: I'll take care of your Harpies. And when I get my hands on you, there won't be enough of you to turn into ashes!

ZEUS: You DARE threaten Zeus, honey-bunch?

HERA: I'm coming, Zeus! Get your thunderbolts ready!

ZEUS: I've got plenty of 'em! *(HE pulls glittering thunderbolts from pocket on ladder.)*

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HERA: And they don't scare me! (*SHE mounts a step.*) Ha!
You see? You're just bluffing! There AREN'T any
Harpies! (*SHE mounts another step.*) Hahahahah!

(*HARPIES step out from behind the ladder.*)

HARPIE ONE: Yo, Joe! You see what I see?

HARPIE TWO: Yeah, Mack! Some dame tryin' to get to the
top.

HARPIE ONE: Ain't no place for a dame!

HERA: You chauvinist!

HARPIE TWO: Ain't nice to call names, lady.

HARPIE ONE: Now, get down outta there or we're gonna
have to get tough!

HERA: How tough's tough?

HARPIE TWO: Whatdaya say, Joe? A pillar of salt?

HARPIE ONE: Yeah, Mack, it'd serve her right!

HERA: What do you mean, pillar of salt?

HARPIE TWO: We snap our fingers and that's just what
you'll be.

HARPIE ONE: 'Course the cows 'n pigs 'n such will lick you
down to size in no time.

HERA: That's disgusting!

HARPIE TWO: Then get down to earth.

HERA: But I am Zeus's wife! He needs me!

HARPIE ONE: That true, Zeus?

ZEUS: Well, now, I really was looking for a bit of time to
myself.

HERA: Is that so?! Well, you're either going to face the
music now or later. And you'll eventually HAVE to come
down out of those clouds!

ZEUS: Buttercup, I just don't understand why you're so
angry.

HERA: You don't, do you? Look up at the sky!

ZEUS: What about it?

HERA: You like what you see?

ZEUS: Very nice. Stars everywhere.

HARPIE ONE: And there goes a comet!

HARPIE TWO: You sure that wasn't a 747?

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ZEUS: What's a 747?

HARPIE TWO: Haven't been invented yet, you laurel leaf.
But when they are, you'll be able to make a much faster
getaway than this!

HERA: You threw some new stars up there this morning,
didn't you?

ZEUS: Yes, aren't they beautiful? I call it—Hercules...Uh
oh.

HERA: Uh oh! Is that ALL you can say? Uh oh?

ZEUS: Well, Hera, honey, I know I promised to name the
next constellation after you, but—

HERA: But what?!

ZEUS: I thought Hercules needed the boost a bit.

HERA: The BOOST?! I'd like to boost him up to Mars!

ZEUS: I already asked Mars and he wouldn't have him.

HERA: That boy of yours is a worthless, idiotic, brainless—

ZEUS: He's going to be one of the greatest heroes the
world has ever seen! And someday he'll sit up on
Olympus with all the gods.

HERA: I hate to say it, Zeus, but Hercules is about as mortal
as a mortal can get.

HARPIE ONE: Yeah...you remember the time that you took
him hunting?

HARPIE TWO: The only thing he caught was the
chickenpox!

ZEUS: I must admit that was a pretty fowl experience.

HARPIE ONE: Or the time you were going to train him to
throw thunderbolts?

HARPIE TWO: They're still trying to rebuild the part of
Athens he struck.

ZEUS: Yes, a lesser being would have found that
experience enlightening. But I still have hope for the boy!

HERA: He's not a boy! He's a man! Using the term loosely,
of course.

HARPIE ONE: You know, boss, she's got a point.

HARPIE TWO: The kid just doesn't got what it takes.

ZEUS: Begone, Harpie!

HARPIE ONE: A fine howdeedo. Offer some constructive
criticism...

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HARPIE TWO: And what do you get? A swift kick! (*THEY exit behind the ladder.*)

ZEUS: You'd better go hide before I clip your wings!

HERA: So, Zeus, I'm going to lay my cards on the table. I want that constellation up there named Hera.

ZEUS: It doesn't look like you. Look at those muscles.

HERA: I got muscles!

ZEUS: Look at that hair.

HERA: I got BETTER looking hair!

ZEUS: Look at that smile!

HERA: I got—well, two out of three ain't bad, buster!

ZEUS: Begone, Hera. You tire me!

HERA: I'm not going to let this rest, Zeus!

ZEUS: I'm sure you won't. (*HE comes down from the ladder carrying thunderbolts.*)

HERA: Good, then you'll make the change.

ZEUS: Over my dead body!

HERA: But you're immortal!

ZEUS: How about that!

HERA: Why you!

ZEUS: Take a step closer and I'll give you an acupuncture treatment with a thunderbolt.

HERA: You wouldn't dare!

ZEUS: How do you think I got Minerva's hair to curl so beautifully?!

HERA: You...you...Zeus, you!

(*HERA storms off SR. HERCULES enters meekly, SL.*)

HERCULES: Dad?

ZEUS: Oh, there you are! Here, son, catch! (*HE tosses a thunderbolt, but HERCULES doesn't catch it. We hear a BLAST OF THUNDER.*)

HERCULES: Sorry, Dad.

ZEUS: Don't tell me. Tell that farmer down there who lost olive trees.

HERCULES: (*Calling down*) Sorry. I'll plant some more trees tonight.

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ZEUS: Oh, son, you've got to stop being so nice and kind. You're going to be a god someday, for crying out loud.

HERCULES: I've been thinking about that, Dad. No offense, but I don't think I want to be a god.

ZEUS: What?!

HERCULES: I mean, I'd have to learn to yell and scream and throw thunderbolts to the earth and not even care. I'd have to cause floods and famines and fires, and well, I'm just not cut out for it.

ZEUS: Not cut out for it? Son, you're the spitting image of your father! You've GOT to get into this power thing! After all, there's no greater thrill than watching all the mortals squirming in terror, running in fear. Ah! Makes me feel alive!

HERCULES: Dad, there's something more important I wanted to talk to you about.

ZEUS: Let me guess...you want to spend some time with Achilles learning how to fight!

HERCULES: C'mon, Dad! That guy's a real heel.

ZEUS: What is it, then?

HERCULES: Dad...I'm in love.

ZEUS: Love? What's that?

HERCULES: It's this feeling.

ZEUS: Feeling?

HERCULES: Yeah.

ZEUS: What's a feeling?

HERCULES: It's kind of like the temperature of the mortal heart.

ZEUS: I forget sometimes that you're mortal.

HERCULES: Yeah...and the love bug has bit me bad.

ZEUS: I'm sure there's some kind of antidote!

HERCULES: But I don't want to get cured.

ZEUS: Of course you do!

HERCULES: I want to get married.

ZEUS: Married? Like Hera and me?

HERCULES: No, not like Hera and you. I mean really married. We like each other.

ZEUS: You do? (*HERCULES nods dumbly.*) Well, marriage IS one of the requirements for becoming a god.

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ZEUS: *(Cont'd.)* So, who IS this girl you want to marry?
Probably someone after the family jewels.

HERCULES: Her name's Megara...and she doesn't even know we HAVE any family jewels. She thinks I'm just a poet who earns what every Grecian earns.

ZEUS: She doesn't know you're my son?

HERCULES: I just...couldn't bring myself to tell her, Dad.

ZEUS: Why? Are you ashamed?

HERCULES: It's more like overkill. Hi, my name's Hercules and my dad's the head of all the gods. How am I going to get an honest response to that?

ZEUS: Honesty? Love? What's this new generation coming to?

HERCULES: Please, Dad, can I get married?

ZEUS: I'll tell you what, son...let's go meet your little cutie and we'll see if she's thumbs up or thumbs down.

HERCULES: Wait a minute! Even if you don't like her, I do, so no feeding her to the vultures.

ZEUS: Scout's honor.

HERCULES: Then come on!

ZEUS: Where to?

HERCULES: The Olympic Cafe. Oh, and you'd better assume a human disguise. The food doesn't agree with gods.

(HERCULES leads ZEUS off SL. HERA enters SR with a smile on her face. She holds a small bell and rings it. A moment later, MEDUSA appears, her head covered in snakes.)

HERA: What kept you, Medusa?

MEDUSA: I was at the beauty parlor getting my fangs milked.

HERA: Too bad I can't look at you!

MEDUSA: Yeah...you don't know what you're missing, kiddo. So, what's up? You got some telemarketer you want to turn into stone?

HERA: I need a spell.

MEDUSA: What kind of spell?

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HERA: You've heard of love potions, haven't you?

MEDUSA: Oh, your goddess, have you got the hots for somebody?

HERA: It's not for me, you idiot!

MEDUSA: You mustn't call names, Hera. There's nothing that says I can't cast a spell on you!

HERA: I'm sorry..I'm just so frustrated with all the attention Zeus pays that whimpy son of his.

MEDUSA: Hercules?

HERA: Yes...and now the lazy little louse says he's in love and wants to marry some waitress at the Olympic Cafe.

MEDUSA: His marriage will move him a step closer to being a god. After that it's just a matter of a few acts of heroism, a miracle or two—

HERA: Don't remind me! I can't let that happen or Zeus will NEVER give me my own constellation. So I'd like a little anti-love potion.

MEDUSA: I see...something along the lines of 90210.

HERA: 90210?

MEDUSA: Exactly! One whiff of this and she'll go woof!

(MEDUSA hands HERA a bottle.)

HERA: Any antidote?

MEDUSA: None. But it's only temporary. It will last for twenty-four hours.

HERA: That's all?

MEDUSA: True love is very powerful, Hera. It can't be stopped for long. But what would you know about that?

HERA: All right! I'll take it.

MEDUSA: And in return?

HERA: Which village this time?

MEDUSA: The one at the base of Mt. Olympus. They have some very nice looking people there who'll make wonderful chess pieces.

HERA: You're making a chess set?

MEDUSA: It gets so boring spending my time alone. Chess will be just the thing. I can play against my hair. *(SHE pulls down one snake from her head.)*

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MEDUSA: *(Cont'd.)* You can't wait to beat me, can you?
Oh, go hiss yourself!

HERA: All right. The one village, but that's it.

MEDUSA: Oh, and I've got a new phone number. It's right here on the card. *(SHE hands HERA a business card.)*

HERA: I-800-GET MEAN. Thank you, Medusa. I'll be in touch.

MEDUSA: Oh, really, Hera, just a quick glance and you'll make the most beautiful statue ever!

HERA: Begone! *(MEDUSA exits SR.)* All right, Zeus. You're in for it now!

(HERA exits SL. CHORUS enters with two tables and four benches, placing a table and two benches SR and SL.)

CHORUS: Oh, Zeus and Herky, if you only knew
What Hera's planning to do to you.
If she had her way she'd be number one
But we've got a feeling that wouldn't be fun.
She's sly and tricky and mean as a snake.
Watch out when she's around, for Pete's sake!

(Two CHORUS members sit and act like customers. Another serves as a waiter. HERCULES leads ZEUS on SL. Zeus uses a cane and acts like an old man.)

HERCULES: Right this way, Grandpa.

ZEUS: Good disguise, eh, son?

HERCULES: Shhhhh!

(CHORUS/WAITER approaches THEM.)

WAITER: Evenin'. Two for dinner tonight?

HERCULES: Yes.

WAITER: This table all right?

ZEUS: It's a bit drafty right here. You got something closer to the fire?

HERCULES: It's fine, Grandpa! It'll warm up!

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ZEUS: Easy for you to say, whippersnapper. (*HE and HERCULES sit.*)

WAITER: Now, this evening we have a nice stuffed grape leaf served on a bed of alfalfa sprouts with a Santa Fe ranch dressing.

ZEUS: That's what you mortals eat?

HERCULES: Grandpa!

ZEUS: It's no wonder you're mortal!

HERCULES: (*To WAITER*) He has delusions of grandeur. Is Megara here?

WAITER: I'll see if she's in the kitchen. Weirdo! (*HE exits SR.*)

HERCULES: Knock it off, Dad, or you'll blow your cover!

ZEUS: Actually, this is good, son. I haven't been down on earth this far in a long time, and it's giving me a few ideas on how to straighten things up around here. We're going to start with the food!

(*MEGARA enters SR.*)

MEGARA: Herky!

HERCULES: (*Rushing to MEGARA*) Megara!

MEGARA: You brought your Grandpa! I am so honored to meet you.

ZEUS: Pleasure's all mine.

HERCULES: Can you join us?

MEGARA: Just for a minute. I've got lamb shanks to chase down in the kitchen.

(*HERA enters SL. WAITER crosses to her.*)

WAITER: Table for one?

HERA: Do I look like I eat alone?

WAITER: I don't see anybody else.

HERA: I'm with THEM!

ZEUS: Oh, no!

HERCULES: What's SHE doing here?

HERA: (*Moving to ZEUS'S table*) Well, well, well, what a coincidence running into you here.

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ZEUS: So, they let you out on parole or what?

HERA: Cute, Grandpa. And who do we have here?

HERCULES: This is Megara, Grandma.

MEGARA: Grandma! Why, you're too young to be a grandmother!

HERA: Flattery will get you everywhere!

MEGARA: And you're wearing the most beautiful perfume. What is it?

HERA: It's called 90210. Want to try some? *(SHE pulls out the bottle MEDUSA had given her.)*

MEGARA: May I?

HERA: Be my guest!

(MEGARA sprays herself with perfume.)

HERCULES: Oh, Megara...what a wonderful scent!

MEGARA: *(Slaps HERCULES across the face)* FRESH!

HERCULES: Megara! What'd I do?

MEGARA: Nothing, thank goodness. And you can keep your stupid ring! I wouldn't marry you if you were the last donkey in the corral!

(MEGARA tosses ring at HERCULES and exits SR.)

HERCULES: Megara! Megara, what's wrong?

ZEUS: I think I know what's wrong!

HERA: Why are you looking at me like that, Zeus?

ZEUS: That perfume was nothing but a poisonous potion. Probably something Medusa cooked up.

HERCULES: How DARE you!

HERA: I can do anything I want, Hercules. I'm a god and you're not.

HERCULES: Dad!

ZEUS: She's right, son.

HERCULES: That doesn't change the fact that I love Megara.

HERA: Love! What a fool.

HERCULES: Oh, Hera, I'd do anything for Megara!

HERA: Anything?

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HERCULES: I'd climb every mountain, ford every stream...
follow every rainbow...

ZEUS: Wrong play, Herky.

HERA: I'm so glad you're willing to do anything for love.
Because I've got a few chores that need tending to,
Hercules.

ZEUS: Hera! You have not consulted me about this—

HERA: There's only one antidote for 90210...and I'm the
only one who's got it. So if you ever want your little
waitress to take your order again, you'll do exactly as I
say. Now, here, Hercules. Get these jobs done and I'll
give you the antidote. (*SHE hands HERCULES a list.*)

HERCULES: Kill the lion...get rid of the hydra...clean the
Aegean stables...wouldn't you rather have me just rig up
some crazy program for your computer?

(*CHORUS moves to them.*)

ZEUS: (*Grabs the list from HERCULES*) Hera! These are
terrible labors!

CHORUS/WAITER: (*Grabs the list from ZEUS*) Allow us!

CHORUS: Find the Nemean Lion quick,
Steal his hide so soft and thick.
Then to put it plainly into words,
Bring back feathers from the Stymphalian birds.
If you live, the Arcadian Stag
Is such a challenge, such a drag,
Clip his antlers from his head.
I want to wear them instead!
Next will come the wild Bore.
He'll tell ten stories then some more.
Shut his mouth, cut his drone—
You're closer to the godly throne.
Then find golden apples three;
Bring them in one piece to me!
After that, clean the stable
Of King Augeus, if you're able.
My, but his horses love a mess,

CHORUS: *(Cont'd.)*
But you'll figure that out, I guess!
Follow that by making haste
To steal the belt from Hippolyta's waist.
And then, if you're not completely dead,
Bring me back the Hydra's head.
(Actually nine of them to be exact.)
Oh, dear boy, don't break your neck!
Finally break the Cretan bull's run
And with any luck, you'll be done!

(TWO CHORUS MEMBERS bow, then exit SR.)

HERA: Labors of love, right, Hercules? Get going or you can kiss Betty Boop good-bye! *(SHE laughs as she moves SL.)*

WAITER: And how was your meal, madam?

HERA: Delicious! And, oh, give the check to him! *(HERA points to ZEUS and laughs. She then exits SL.)*

HERCULES: Gosh, Dad...what do you think?

ZEUS: I think I'd probably forget the whole thing.

HERCULES: Forget the whole thing? But, Dad—

ZEUS: *(Pointing to WAITER)* How about THAT waitress? I'd classify her as vavavavoom! What do you think?

HERCULES: Yuck!

ZEUS: You've got it bad!

HERCULES: It's Megara or no one!

ZEUS: *(Handing HERCULES the list)* Then I'm afraid—

HERCULES: All of 'em?

ZEUS: Get started. There's something fishy about this whole thing. I'll keep watch from Olympus and when I find out what's REALLY going on, I'll get back to you.

HERCULES: Ah, Dad...you got something that could help me out a bit? I mean, I'm just mortal after all.

ZEUS: Well, son, I don't exactly carry a lot of magic with me. I'll tell you what. Head on down this road for about twelve miles and you'll come to an old oak tree. Under it you'll find a helmet. The helmet will vibrogiro your brain. It'll give you all kinds of great ideas.

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HERCULES: I was thinking more along the lines of a sword or something.

ZEUS: Here, son. The pen is mightier than the sword. Use this, but only once. It will completely disable whoever you write on.

HERCULES: Are you sure? It looks like a Bic ball-point to me.

(HERCULES is about to write on his own hand.)

ZEUS: Don't! You'll be cast under a terrible spell! And one last thing. Go out back and dig up seven radishes.

HERCULES: Am I on "Candid Camera" or something, Dad?

ZEUS: This is no joke.

HERCULES: Seven radishes?

ZEUS: Dig them up. Put them in your pocket. Use them when you need to! The rest is up to you.

HERCULES: Dad—!

ZEUS: *(Moves SL)* A new constellation graces the sky, my boy. It's named Hercules. Your name is already in the stars. Live up to it! *(HE exits SL.)*

HERCULES: I don't want to be up in the stars. Just down here with Megara.

(MEGARA enters SR.)

MEGARA: I don't ever want you to mention my name! You understand, you loser?

HERCULES: Megara, I love you!

MEGARA: That's your problem, wussy! Now GET LOST!

(HERCULES exits. WAITER moves to MEGARA.)

WAITER: Megara, is that any way to talk to a customer?

MEGARA: I'll talk to customers any way I like, you overstuffed grape leaf!

WAITER: Why...why...you're fired!

MEGARA: So? I was looking for a job when I found this one!

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(MEGARA exits SR. CHORUS enters.)

CHORUS: Things look bad and are getting worse.
Poor Megara's under the curse.
Hercules doesn't really have a clue,
Too bad he's not smart like me and you.
He and his radishes are out in back.
Unaware of the beast about to attack!

(CHORUS clears away tables. HERCULES enters SL, brushing off radishes, putting them in a bag tied to his waist.)

HERCULES: Six...*(HE pops one in his bag, then dusts another.)* Seven!

(The NIMEAN LION enters SR, terrified, looking back at SR. He runs smack into HERCULES. They look at one another, then scream.)

HERCULES: Don't kill me!

LION: Don't kill me! *(HERCULES throws a radish at the LION.)* What are you doing? Stop that!

HERCULES: My father said I'd know when to use these!

LION: Radishes? I HATE radishes, but they won't hurt me one bit!

HERCULES: Why not?

LION: I'm the Nemean Lion...and I've got the toughest hide in the world. Nothing can penetrate it!

HERCULES: That's ridiculous!

LION: I know. But it's true. Go ahead, try to poke me with something.

HERCULES: I don't have anything on me...

LION: Oh, here, a wooden stake. *(LION hands HERCULES a wooden stake.)* I always carry one with me just to prove my point.

HERCULES: I don't really want to hurt you.

LION: But I'm first on your list.

HERCULES: You are?

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LION: I'm afraid so. Ever since I scared Hera one night while she was dancing in the woods, she's wanted my hide. Go ahead, don't be shy! (*HERCULES tries to poke LION, but nothing happens.*) See what I mean?

HERCULES: Well, I'm not the strongest person on earth.

LION: You're about the weakest, Herky, boy. Here, try a hammer. (*LION gives HERCULES a hammer.*) Go on. Give it several good whacks. (*HERCULES does so, but to no avail.*) See?

HERCULES: Oh, dear, this is a problem. And radishes don't work.

LION: You could just leave me alone, you know.

HERCULES: I'd love to, but if I don't destroy you and bring Hera your hide, I'll never get to marry the woman I love.

LION: Oh, so THAT'S it! Well, you could strangle me.

HERCULES: I'm not strong enough for that. Besides, I think you're rather nice. I don't usually strangle people I think are nice.

LION: The only reason you like me is because I'm a big coward, that's all. You could strangle me if I attacked you, but I'd never, ever do that. I tried to explain that to Hera, but she wouldn't listen...and now...well, I don't know what to do!

MOUSE: (*Off SR*) Where is he?

LION: Oh, help me! Save me!

HERCULES: What's wrong?

LION: He's after me!

(*LION races off SL as MOUSE enters SR.*)

MOUSE: What have you done with him?

HERCULES: With who?

MOUSE: That yellow-bellied lion!

HERCULES: Aren't you afraid to go looking for a lion?

MOUSE: Ordinarily, of course. But that lily-livered, no-account coward is more fun to chase than a barrel of monkeys!

HERCULES: Well, he did run by here.

MOUSE: So? Which way did he go?

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HERCULES: That way! *(HE points into AUDIENCE.)*

MOUSE: Well, of all the lame-brained stunts! Get back here
you crazy lion! I'm comin' to get you!

*(MOUSE races off into AUDIENCE and HERCULES exits
SR as CHORUS enters SL.)*

CHORUS: Labor one is put on hold
And Hercules did as he was told.
He found the oak tree ten miles hence
In a forest deep and dense.
There a helmet lay as Zeus had said
And Hercules popped it on his head.

*(HERCULES enters SR wearing a helmet. The CHORUS
exits SR.)*

HERCULES: Wow! I feel strong! No, better than strong. I
feel powerful! No, better than powerful! I feel invincible!

(Three STYMPHALIAN BIRDS enter from SL and SR.)

BIRD ONE: How invincible do you feel?

BIRD TWO: Just ask yourself one question.

BIRD THREE: Do I feel lucky?

HERCULES: You're just three silly birds.

BIRD ONE: Is that all you see?

BIRD TWO: Look at the list—we're labor two.

BIRD THREE: The Stymphalian Birds—with an attitude.

*(ALL three birds put their hands on their hips and toss a hip
to one side.)*

HERCULES: Birds with an attitude?

BIRDS: *(As in a rap, dancing around HERCULES)*

Our beaks are bronze,
So are our claws
We'll shred and dice
Without a cause.

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BIRDS: *(Cont'd.)*

Our wings can't break

They're metal, see?

There's nothin' you

Can do to me!

Let's have dinner,

Let's rip him up.

There's no way

He can trip us up!

(The BIRDS begin to peck at HERCULES, who races away. He taps the helmet.)

Taps his helmet,

What a freak!

Your helmet's no match

For our beaks!

HERCULES: Pluck a feather

From their tail

Will cause them all

To weep and wail!

(HERCULES plucks a feather from each of the BIRD'S tails. They immediately begin to weep and wail.)

BIRD ONE: What have you done?

BIRD TWO: My beautiful bronze beak...it's back to normal.

BIRD THREE: My wings! They're just wings now.

BIRD ONE: We're just birds...plain...everyday birds!

BIRD TWO: I hope you're happy, Hercules.

BIRD THREE: You've made us obsolete!

(LION races on SL, screaming. The BIRDS scatter.)

LION: Help! Oh, goodness, where can I hide?!

HERCULES: That way!

(HERCULES points off into AUDIENCE. LION races off through AUDIENCE as MOUSE enters.)

MOUSE: All right, buster? Where is he?

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HERCULES: *(Points into AUDIENCE)* That way!

MOUSE: You think I'm going to believe you after the last
bum steer you sent me on! He went this way!

(MOUSE exits SR, passing CHORUS entering SR.)

CHORUS: The feathers tucked in his bag,
Hercules met up with a very strange stag.

*(ARCADIAN STAG enters SL. He wears antlers and has
tickets in his hand. CHORUS exits.)*

STAG: Psssst!

HERCULES: Are you talking to me?

STAG: See anybody ELSE around?

HERCULES: No.

STAG: Then I mean you! Get over here.

HERCULES: Well, I'm rather busy right at the moment.

STAG: Everybody's got time for a deal, buddy.

HERCULES: What kind of deal?

STAG: You look like you're in the market for a good used
chariot.

HERCULES: How do you know that?

STAG: Scope out the feet! You got more dirt on your soles
than the LaBrea Tar Pits!

HERCULES: Walking is good, healthy exercise.

STAG: Better than riding in style? Arriving with clean feet?
Here's what I'm going to do, Bud.

HERCULES: My name's not Bud.

STAG: Anything you say, Charlie.

HERCULES: It's not Charlie, either.

STAG: Keep me guessing, Rodney!

HERCULES: It's Hercules.

STAG: Hercules? Son of Zeus? Stepson of Hera? A guy
with some bucks? Well, listen, as one buck to another, I
know even if you've got it, you want to save as much as
possible. Here's what I'll do. I'll sell you a very nice two-
stander chariot, chrome hubcaps, chrome trim, extra wide
suspension for a mere...700 denari.

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HERCULES: Seven hundred denari?!

STAG: All right, 650 and I'll throw in two tickets to see the Rams mash the Chargers.

HERCULES: You're kidding! Nobody's got tickets to the Rams-Chargers game.

STAG: What do you call these?

HERCULES: Wow! You drive a hard bargain.

STAG: I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'll make it 625 and a pair of tickets to *Phantom of the Odyssey!*

HERCULES: That's the hottest ticket in town!

STAG: And I've got two of 'em here.

HERCULES: I don't know. I'm really not into driving chariots. An awful lot of pollution involved.

STAG: Kid! Five hundred denari, all the tickets and a free weekend at the Village at Breck!

HERCULES: Skiing?! That sounds great, but the maintenance on those chariots is awfully high.

STAG: Look, let's talk 350 and the whole package!

HERCULES: I just don't happen to have it, Mr. Stag, sir.

STAG: Help me out, kid! What DO you have?!

HERCULES: I don't have any money.

STAG: Who needs money in this world? Do you have plastic?

HERCULES: I don't think so!

STAG: I mean MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Discover?

HERCULES: All I've got are seven radishes.

STAG: Seven radishes?

HERCULES: My father gave them to me.

STAG: I'll take 'em!

HERCULES: Not so fast!

STAG: Here, take the tickets, too!

HERCULES: I want your antlers.

STAG: Now, wait a minute. I only grow 'em once a year. What month is it?

HERCULES: April.

STAG: They won't grow back 'til August.

HERCULES: No antlers, no deal.

STAG: All right! Here! Take 'em! Take the tickets! Take the chariot! But give me the radishes.

HERCULES: *(Hands over the radishes)* All seven!

STAG: Thanks, kid. Nice dealin' with you! *(TWO LADIES enter SL, terrified.)* Say, ladies, can I interest you in a fine used chariot?

LADY ONE: He's coming!

LADY TWO: It's horrible!

LADY ONE: You'd better get out of the way.

LADY TWO: If he gets hold of you—he'll never let you go!

(CHORUS enters SR.)

CHORUS: It's true what they say,
For they've seen it happen before
People swallowed whole by
The Erymanthian Bore.
He talks and talks and talks some more.
He's got stories of himself galore!

(BORE enters SL, dragging several PEOPLE tied by a rope.)

BORE: And that was when I told him he would be so much better letting me handle it. I mean, after all, who would know how to do it better? And guess what? *(HE tugs on the rope. The PEOPLE respond.)*

PEOPLE: What?

BORE: I did it faster, better, and cheaper than anybody else. And then there was the time I went to Pensacola. *(The PEOPLE moan.)* It's not polite to moan, is it?

PEOPLE: No, Your Boringness.

BORE: Very good. And you do want to hear what happened in Pensacola, don't you? *(No response)* You DO want to hear, don't you?

HERCULES: I want to hear!

(The PEOPLE gasp.)

BORE: You WANT to hear?

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HERCULES: Oh, yes. I love stories.

BORE: *(Drops rope)* Then let me tell you what happened in Pensacola! *(The PEOPLE, LADIES, CHORUS, and STAG scream and run off in different directions.)* It was just about the time of the grape harvest and I had recently bought a small mobile home I planned to winter in. After all, the old bones were getting a bit rusty in the cold weather, and the little woman and me figured it was time to try out what our neighbors had been doing for years...*(BORE puts his arm around HERCULES and walks him off SR.)* On the way down, we had a bit of the problem. The little woman had the croup, and it was a nagging cough, kind of like this—*(HE coughs loudly, and THEY are gone.)*

(HERA enters SL.)

HERA: Medusa! Medusa!

(ZEUS enters, climbs up his ladder.)

ZEUS: What's wrong, Hera, pudding?

HERA: You KNOW what's wrong! That helmet has given Hercules an unfair advantage!

ZEUS: Has not!

HERA: Has too!

ZEUS: There's nothing magical about that helmet at ALL!

HERA: HA! That boy's never had that many brains before.

ZEUS: He's thinking of how to handle everything himself. And if you don't like it, that's too bad.

(MEDUSA enters SR.)

MEDUSA: *(To ZEUS)* Well, if it isn't the biggest coconut on the tree!

ZEUS: I'm outta here! *(HE exits ladder.)*

MEDUSA: *(To HERA)* You pick the worst times to call! I was just feeding my hair!

HERA: Let it starve! We've got a problem.

End of Freeview

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