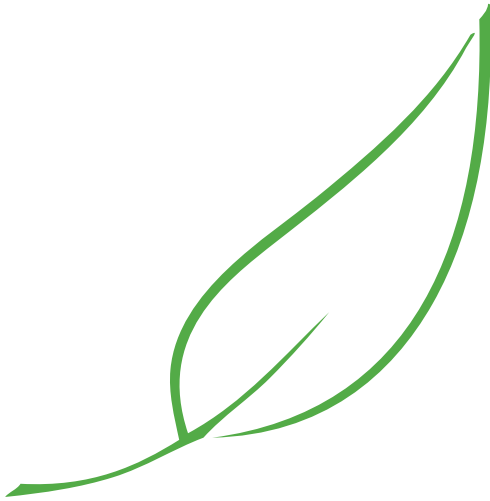


Hercules: Labor 9

The Belt Of Hippolyte

By Craig W. Stump



GREEN ROOM PRESS

greenroompress.com

Copyright Notice

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Green Room Press. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Green Room Press. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Green Room Press. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Green Room Press.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this Work must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this Work. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this Work is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: *Produced by special arrangement with Green Room Press.*

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Green Room Press.

HERCULES: LABOR 9

THE BELT OF HIPPOLYTE

A TWO ACT COMEDY FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

By Craig W. Stump

HERCULES: LABOR 9 - THE BELT OF HIPPOLYTE**By Craig W. Stump**

SYNOPSIS: Hera, Hercules' proverbial wicked stepmother, is determined to make Hercules' mortal life miserable. She is quite pleased when she learns that Hercules is having a hard time living with himself and seeks retribution for his youthful sins. Hercules visits the grumpy oracle Pythia, who sends him to King Eurystheus for guidance. The King assigns Hercules ten heroic Labors (tasks) to perform. Upon the successful completion of the Labors, Hercules will be granted immortality. This adventure takes Hercules and seven of his marvelously funny friends to the Island of Women Warriors to bring back the Belt of Princess Hippolyte, but the spear-thumping Amazon Women have been taught by Hera that no man can be trusted. When the entourage lands on the island, they are greeted with flower-bedecked weapons and taken prisoner. Princess Hippolyte soon discovers that Hercules is not there to conquer her tribe and releases the band to continue their journey, much to Hera's venomous disbelief.

This tongue-in-cheek story is a delightful and sophisticated dead-pan spoof of one chapter in the life of the wonderful Greek superhero, Hercules.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(10+ MEN, 18–32+ WOMEN, VERY FLEXIBLE)*

ZEUS (M)ZEUS is co-narrator of the play and the king of the gods. A very funny character, ZEUS often argues with his wife HERA and has a habit of discussing his life with the audience. *(69 lines)*

HERA (F).....HERA is the other narrator of the play. As queen of the gods, HERA is married to ZEUS and is angry at him for fathering HERCULES with a mortal woman. *(95 lines)*

NYMPHS (F).....Three or four of these golden-skinned beauties of the forest have a brief walk-on in Act One, Scene 1.

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

HERCULES (M).....HERCULES is an intelligent, strong, and good-looking man. He is the level-headed and modest hero of the play. (*136 lines*)

PYTHIA (F).....PYTHIA (PITH-ia) is the funny, animated priestess who serves as the mouthpiece for the sun god, Apollo, at the Oracle of Delphi. (*32 lines*)

ADMETE (F).....ADMETE (AD-me-te) is the spoiled 16 year-old daughter of King Eurystheus. (*25 lines*)

KING EURYSTHEUS (M)(u-RITH-ius) is the king of the city of Tiryns and the father of Admete. He gestures wildly when speaking and is scared of Hercules. (*25 lines*)

PALACE GUARDS (M/F).....Two PALACE GUARDS stand on either side of a doorway in Act One, Scene 2.

MARKETPLACE CROWDVarious vendors, acrobats, jugglers, and other minor characters in Act One, Scene 3. There are 23 speaking roles, but these parts may be doubled.

HERCULES' MEN

THESIUS (M).....THESIUS (THE-sius) is HERCULES' level-headed cousin. He is always looking to protect HERCULES from danger. (*51 lines*)

HYPERMEDES (M).....HYPERMEDES is an extremely hyperactive character. He talks quickly and is very funny. (*29 lines*)

DEMON (M)DEMON (DE-moan) is a shy, yet funny, sheep-herder who loves his sheep and everything about them. (*25 lines*)

- AGAINOD (M)A funny character, AGAINOD (A-gan-od) says everything twice. (23 lines)
- KLUTZAKLES (M) a true klutz, always falling over things. He is also very fond of women and thrilled by the prospect of visiting an island populated solely by females. (38 lines)
- EURIPEDES (M).....EURIPEDES is a lunatic who loves to fight despite his ineptitude. A funny character, he frequently thinks about and discusses food. (25 lines)
- IOTA (M).....Another funny character, IOTA is blind and carries a walking stick. (33 lines)
- ISLAND CHILDREN (M/F) ...These children, about nine or ten years-old, play “king of the hill” with Hercules and his men. There are 24 speaking roles, but these may be doubled.
- PRINCESS HIPPOLYTE (F) .. (Hip-POLLY-tee) princess of the AMAZON WOMEN. A dominant female, she likes to carry and crack her whip. She also falls in love with HERCULES. (96 lines)
- AMAZON WOMEN (F).....The AMAZON WOMEN are warrior women with spears, quarter-staffs, and whips. Some may perform acrobatics, but all dance. There are 16 speaking roles, but these parts may be doubled.

SUGGESTED PROPS AND SET DESIGN

ACT ONE, SCENE 1:

Location: Oracle at Delphi

- An elevated stone or wooden oracle for PYTHIA to sit upon
- A metal gong

ACT ONE, SCENE 2:

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

Location: A royal room

- Two long spears for the PALACE GUARDS
- A Greek column or two
- A stool for ADMETE to sit upon

ACT ONE, SCENE 3:

Location: The marketplace in the city of Tiryns

- An ancient village backdrop
- A few carts with vegetables, meats, cheese, fruits, cloth, flowers, baskets, or other items for sale

ACT ONE, SCENE 4:

Location: A long boat with oars

- The inside of a boat with benches, oars
- A drum for THESIUS
- A hinged hatch for DEMON to peer into
- An empty wooden barrel for water
- Mats for HYPERMEDES to land upon with jumping overboard
- Water to wet HYPERMEDES' hair

ACT ONE, SCENE 5:

Location: An island with a population consisting solely of children

- The wooden barrel from Act One, Scene 4
- Thick mats off the front of the stage for actors to jump onto

ACT ONE, SCENE 6:

Location: Island of the Amazon Women

- Tropical island backdrop (This can be used for Act One, Scenes 6, 7, 8, as well as Act Two, Scenes 2, 4, 5, 6.)

HERCULES' club

- The front of a boat with a long, thick rope attached
- A sword for HERCULES' MEN
- Trees
- Light rocks
- The mats from Act One, Scene 4
- Spears, quarter-staffs, whips for each AMAZON WOMAN, including HIPPOLYTE

ACT ONE, SCENE 7:

Location: Amazon Women's Village

- Tropical island backdrop
- Trees

- Spears, quarter-staffs, whips for each AMAZON WOMAN, including HIPPOLYTE

ACT ONE, SCENE 8:

Location: Amazon Women's Village

- Tropical island backdrop
- Trees
- Spears, quarter-staffs, whips for each AMAZON WOMAN, including HIPPOLYTE
- Three stumps

ACT TWO, SCENE 1:

Location: Princess Hippolyte's Hut

- Metal bar
- Throne

ACT TWO, SCENE 2:

Location: Amazon Women's Village

- Tropical island backdrop
- Trees
- Whip for HIPPOLYTE

ACT TWO, SCENE 3:

Location: Hera's oracle

- Eleven or twelve small tiki torches

ACT TWO, SCENE 4:

Location: Amazon Women's Village

- Spears, quarter-staffs, whips for each AMAZON WOMAN

ACT TWO, SCENE FIVE

Location: Island of the Amazon Women

- Tropical island backdrop
- Trees

Whip for HIPPOLYTE

- A sword for each of HERCULES' MEN

ACT TWO, SCENE SIX

Location: Island of the Amazon Women

- Tropical island backdrop
- The front of a boat, with a long thick rope attached
- A sword for each of HERCULES' MEN
- Trees
- Light rocks
- Leis for each AMAZON WOMAN

NOTES

Act One, Scene 5 may be eliminated from the play if you do not wish to involve young children. If you do choose to perform the scene, there are 24 speaking parts available.

"I would like to dedicate this play to the Hercules cast and crew in the Class of 2007 from Avon Grove High School, West Grove, PA. You took my words and you made them come alive! Thank you!"—*Craig W. Stump*

ACT ONE, SCENE 1: ORACLE AT DELPHI

Two large stone thrones sit in front of the main curtain, one SR and one SL. These chairs must be visible when the curtains are closed. The play begins in darkness, with the curtain closed; a spotlight comes upon center stage, royal (important-sounding) music begins as the curtains part slightly and ZEUS walks through.

ZEUS: I am Zeus, king of the gods!

HERA: (*Spotlight on HERA, who is seated on her throne.*) And who gives the butt end of a horse about it? I've been married to you for...for...two, no, probably going on three thousand years at this point. Do you think that, instead of shooting off your lightning bolts right away, it would hurt to once - just once - show some manners and introduce me first? Huh? Do you think you could do that? Does the word chivalry mean anything to you? No, I guess not! I could understand if I was a mortal woman. I am not an ordinary wife, you know!

ZEUS: Yes, I know, dear. You are not an ordinary wife. (*To himself.*) For that matter, you are not ordinary at all! (*Motioning to HERA.*) Forgive me. This would be my wife, Hera, queen of the gods.

HERA: Yes, queen of the gods! But do I get treated like royalty? Not by my husband, Zeus, the old, lazy, good-for-nothing king of the gods!

ZEUS: How dare you call me old? I am not old!

HERA: (*Sarcastically.*) Of course you are not old! You look great for a four thousand year-old immortal!

ZEUS: Hera, dearest?

HERA: What?

ZEUS: May I tell my story now?

HERA: Fine! Go tell your story, but do not expect me to sit around listening to you blab away at the mouth! (*To herself.*) If he is not sticking his lightning bolts where they do not belong, he is shooting off his big mouth telling a "*my son, the mighty Hercules*" story!

Spotlight out on HERA.

ZEUS: Sorry about that! Hera, queen of the gods, has a tendency to show up when you least expect her to. Or want her to. Or need her to. I am here to tell you a story about my son, Herakles! Her-cu-les as you know him. That is his Roman name. The Romans mispronounced Herakles as Hercules! Well that's wrong - simply and completely wrong. It is not Her-cu-les! It is Her-a-kles. I should know. I named him. We thought of several names for him, me and his mother. Anastasios was one option, but we thought that everybody would shorten it to Ana and no son of King Zeus will have a name from the wrong side of the fence, no sir! Herakles! It means "the glory of Hera." You would think that would have made Hera happy, yes? No, it did not!

Spotlight out on ZEUS and up on HERA.

HERA: Angry! Yes, I was angry! How dare he name that child Herakles? He was just rubbing it in my face, that bum of a husband, Zeus. Herakles! The glory of Hera! Hah! Did he tell you that Herakles is not my child? Oh, he did not tell you that part, now, did he? It is bad enough that a mortal woman is Herakles' mother, but to name the child after me! (*Pauses.*) So, since Zeus thought it was funny to name him *Herakles*, I did whatever I could to make Herakles' mortal life as unhappy as possible. I have to admit that it was quite enjoyable at times.

Spotlight out on HERA; spotlight up on ZEUS.

ZEUS: I was not trying to be funny naming my son Herakles! Honest! I thought it was a nice gesture, but oh baby, was I wrong. So there you have it, Hera spends most of her time trying to make my son's life miserable. But enough about Hera, I want to tell you a myth. Oh yes, a myth. A myth is a story about a god, and there were many gods during Hercules' time. My favorite was the goddess of beauty, Aphrodite. Did she ever deserve to be the goddess of beauty! I am a sucker for a pretty face, and Aphrodite had one pretty face... (*Going off into a dream world.*) All she had to do is look at me...oh, if I was a thousand years younger and single... (*Coming back to reality.*) Yes, yes...we had lots of gods.

Hercules existed when there were many things on Earth that people did not understand. Common people feared these mysteries. It was a time of enchanted forests and magical creatures, like nymphs - golden skinned females who protected the forests.

A few beautiful nymphs come on stage. Their dress is golden, flowing, fairy-like. They walk to ZEUS and gently stroke his arms, hair, etc...

ZEUS: Let me tell you about the nymphs. Not only were they beautiful women - do you see what I mean? They were magical. They did not just live in the forests, they were part of the forests. *(Pauses.)* Taking a walk in the woods had a different meaning back in my day...

NYMPHS exit.

ZEUS: So today's myth is about one of Hercules' adventures. My son, Hercules, did something terrible when he was young and married. So terrible that it bothered him all the time. Hercules was so upset, he had to ask the god Apollo for forgiveness...

Curtain opens on the oracle at Delphi. The oracle at Delphi is a Greek shrine to Apollo, the sun god. The shrine should be elevated if possible. You can make it as elaborate or as simple as you would like. Perhaps an archway, a mini-temple with columns, or an elevated flat-topped rock, etc. There needs to be a gong somewhere next to the oracle. Keep the lighting low. You could have smoke surrounding or coming from behind the shrine. In this scene there is a priestess, PYTHIA, who speaks for the god Apollo. She should be mystical in appearance (long scarves, and/or a mask, etc.) and mystical in behavior (fluid movements), with a voice that changes from "normal" to high and squeaky (or two variations that work for the actor).

PYTHIA is lying down, sleeping.

HERCULES: (*Enters, pauses in front of the oracle, breathes deeply, and strikes the gong. Speaking strongly.*) Pythia, speaker for the mighty sun god, Apollo! I have come seeking your wisdom.

PYTHIA: (*Stretching, yawning, and looking up.*) Oh baby, look at those stars! (*Points at the stars. HERCULES looks.*) They are beautiful, are they not?

HERCULES: (*Confused.*) Yes, they are beautiful.

PYTHIA: The stars hold secrets. They tell us great things. Do you know what the stars are telling me right now?

HERCULES: I would not know what the stars are saying to the mighty sun god, Apollo.

PYTHIA: Well, they are telling me that... (*Sarcastic and irritated, with a voice change and increase in speed of speaking.*) It is the middle of the night! And do you know what Apollo does in the middle of the night? Well, Apollo will tell you what Apollo does! Apollo *sleeps!* Which is what you should be doing!

BLACKOUT, except for a single spotlight on PYTHIA. HERCULES freezes.

PYTHIA: (*To herself.*) Why is it always the middle of the night? Can't anyone have a problem *before* Apollo goes to bed? Nooooo, they could not possibly do that! That would be too much to ask. They all wait until the night is thick, and then they wander up here to speak to Apollo. Apollo works too much. Apollo spends all day pushing the sun across the sky, and at night Apollo must give advice to insomniacs! Apollo has to talk to Zeus about a new job. Oh, what Apollo would do for one night, just one entire night of undisturbed sleep. (*Lights back up and back to HERCULES.*) So, who are you and what do you want?

HERCULES: Oh Apollo, god of the sun, it is me, Hercules!

PYTHIA: (*Looks shocked.*) Hercules? Hercules! Apollo is sorry. Apollo did not know it was you! It is so dark, Apollo could not make out who you were. Apollo gets so many crazy people in the middle of the night, it drives Apollo insane.

HERCULES: I am sorry for the disturbing you.

PYTHIA: Oh, do not worry about it! You are *family*, you are Apollo's half-brother. So, how are you?

HERCULES: (*Quickly and with panic.*) I cannot live with myself anymore. My torment is great. I do not deserve to live! My soul is burning inside. Unless I am able to quell my misery, I will be forced to take my own life.

PYTHIA: Whoa! Pull back on the horses and slow down that chariot! A simple “I am fine, Apollo,” or “I am good, how are you Apollo,” would have been okay. That was awfully deep for the middle of the night. Let me get warmed up here before you self-destruct! Try it again a bit slower, so Apollo can take it all in.

HERCULES: I have committed acts which are unthinkable!

PYTHIA: Unthinkable, huh? Well, then, do not think about them! (*Pause as PYTHIA chuckles a little and pats herself on the back.*) Come on, that was funny. But, since you are not in a laughing mood right now - all right, what seems to be your problem?

HERCULES: What I have done is so awful...so utterly revolting...ever so disgusting...that...that I...

PYTHIA: That you...?

HERCULES: That I...cannot continue!

PYTHIA: Cannot continue what?

HERCULES: Cannot continue living, knowing what I have done!

PYTHIA: (*A little exasperated.*) And what have you done, Hercules? It cannot be all that bad.

HERCULES: Worse! It is so horrific that I am unable to speak it.

PYTHIA: Help Apollo out here, Hercules. This crummy job is difficult enough, but if you do not tell Apollo what you did, Apollo is probably going to have a hard time trying to correct it.

HERCULES: (*Thrilled.*) Yes, mighty Apollo, yes! Tell me how to correct it! What can I do to relinquish this guilt which wears so heavily upon my large shoulders?

PYTHIA: Well, a good start would be to tell me what you did so I can...do what I can.

HERCULES: I am unable to.

PYTHIA: We are walking around in circles here, Hercules. (*Pause.*) Apollo has it! Come closer, Hercules.

HERCULES takes one step closer.

PYTHIA: Closer...

HERCULES takes another step closer. PYTHIA speaks loudly.

PYTHIA: CLOSER!

HERCULES moves right next to PYTHIA.

PYTHIA: Whisper in my ear. Apollo will be the only one who can hear it.

HERCULES leans over and whispers in PYTHIA's ear. Once he is done, she speaks loudly, in a funny voice.

PYTHIA: Holy Zeus! You did what!? All of them?

HERCULES nods.

PYTHIA: You really did mess things up, didn't you? Apollo is used to people who stole their neighbor's goat, or people who have a really ugly big toe on their left foot, or all the people who have voices in their heads telling them what to do. You know, your typical everyday crazy things. But geeeezzz, this is serious stuff you did!

HERCULES: Yes, now you know the source of my agony. I must atone for my sins.

PYTHIA: You may be agonizing for a long time, Hercules! How is Apollo going to fix it? Buying your neighbor two chickens will not quite make up for this one, will it? In fact, there are not enough chickens in all of Thebes to correct this baby! Okay, okay, let me think a moment.

HERCULES: Anything, anything, so that I may be able to live with myself again!

PYTHIA: Wait! Wait! What is Apollo saying? Big mistakes require big punishments. What was Apollo thinking? You are the son of Zeus! Apollo is so dumb. This is a piece of baklava.

HERCULES: I do not understand.

PYTHIA: Hercules, oh half brother of Apollo...Zeus is your dad, right?

HERCULES: Right...

PYTHIA: And Zeus is king of the gods, right?

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

HERCULES: Yes...

PYTHIA: So, somewhere in the rules that govern Greek gods, there has to be one that says the son of the big guy is allowed a big screw up every now and then, so...you are off the hook!

HERCULES: Off the hook? But, how?

PYTHIA: Oh, I like this one! (*Waving arms.*) With a wave of Apollo's mighty hand, Apollo the sun god pardons Hercules, the son of Zeus, for his big mess up and not one chicken shall change hands.

PYTHIA and HERCULES freeze. Spotlight on HERA.

HERA: (*Screams.*) Aaaaahhhhhh! Foul! Foul! Foul! Zeus!

Spotlight on ZEUS.

ZEUS: What? What?

HERA: Are you watching this farce?

ZEUS: Yes, Hera, queen of the gods, I am watching! What is your problem?

HERA: Problem? Problem? You have to ask?

Spotlight out on HERA.

ZEUS: Yes, Hera, I have to ask. (*To the audience.*) Why do women think that men know what they are thinking? Men are clueless when it comes to women. Men do not have any idea of what women are thinking. We have to be told what women are thinking. Is that a hard concept? We men are simple creatures that need things spelled out for us. Small words, short sentences...

Spotlight back up on HERA.

ZEUS: Hera, dearest, I am sure that I know what you are thinking, but just to make sure that everything is crystal clear, would you mind explaining it to me so I can be sure that I understand you?

HERA: Apollo is pardoning Hercules!

ZEUS: (*Confused.*) So...?

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

HERA: What do you mean “so”?

ZEUS: Exactly that. (*Pauses.*) So...?

HERA: So...he cannot do that. Apollo cannot pardon Hercules for his actions just because he is your son!

ZEUS: Actually, I thought it was pretty creative for Apollo. I am so tired of his advice involving chickens. This was a step forward for him!

HERA: Being your son has nothing to do with assigning a punishment! Who cares if Hercules is your son?

ZEUS: Well, I most certainly do!

HERA: Good, that makes one of you! You know as well as I do, that oracles must solve all problems in a fair and equitable manner. The punishment must fit the crime.

ZEUS: Yes, yes, the punishment must fit the crime.

HERA's spotlight goes out. ZEUS speaks to the oracle.

ZEUS: Apollo, as much as I was intrigued by your creative punishment for our boy, Hercules, your punishment must fit the crime. Sorry about that, son...

ZEUS' spotlight goes out and we are back to HERCULES.

PYTHIA: (*Looking at the sky.*) Huh? What? Okay, Dad!

HERCULES: You are going to pardon me? How can that be? My act was so terrible...

PYTHIA: (*Looking back to HERCULES.*) Did Apollo say pardon? No, no! What Apollo meant was...Hercules, your crime was great, and your punishment must be great also. Of course, that is what Apollo meant! Give Apollo a moment. Okay, taking everything into account and multiplying by four...well, Apollo has no choice. Your punishment is severe, Hercules! Here goes... You must go to Tiryns and serve King Eurystheus for twelve years. (*Holds up ten fingers.*) During those years you must perform ten Heroic Labors. Each and every one of the Labors is impossible for any human. King Eurystheus will dictate your Labors.

HERCULES: As you wish, god Apollo.

PYTHIA: Apollo needs you to realize that your punishment is nearly impossible. But you are Hercules, the son of Zeus, so the gods will not accept anything less. At the conclusion of your Labors, Hercules, your conscience will be cleared. Your soul will be cleansed. You may live at peace with yourself.

HERCULES: *(With extreme emotion.)* Thank you Apollo, thank you! Your wisdom has prevailed.

PYTHIA: You may not succeed in these Labors, Hercules.

HERCULES: I will not fail you, Apollo.

PYTHIA: *(Getting excited as he says the following.)* But, wait. If you do complete these Labors...oh, this is good...because of your special birth, there is a special bonus waiting for you at the end. You will be granted...check this out... You will be granted... *(Pause, takes on a meditation pose.)* ...immortality!

HERCULES: Immortality? I simply want to be rid of my past horrors.

PYTHIA: Yes, yes, but a big crime deserves a big punishment. Your Labors will be so heroic that anyone who is successful in completing them must be rewarded. Your reward will be... *(Pause, same meditation pose.)* ...immortality!

HERCULES: But immortality is only for...

PYTHIA: Yes, you guessed it! Upon your death as a human, you will ascend to Mt. Olympus as a god.

HERCULES: *(Exasperated and loud.)* A god? *(Normal voice.)* Mt. Olympus? I do not know what to say.

PYTHIA: Then it is best to say nothing at all. Hah! This is a journey that only the most worthy could accomplish. Apollo is giving you a chance to live with the gods! Mt. Olympus can be your home! Now go, Hercules. Take yourself to Tiryns and seek out King Eurystheus.

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2: ADMETE

Spotlight on ZEUS.

ZEUS: Oh well done, Apollo! Nice finishing touch. Immortality at the end of the Labors! You are showing a bit of flair. You are making me a proud father.

Spotlight on HERA.

HERA: Zeus!

ZEUS: Yes, oh Hera, queen of the gods.

HERA: What kind of nonsense is that?

ZEUS: What kind of nonsense is what, my dearest?

HERA: Hercules does ten lousy tasks, clears his conscience, and he becomes a god!

ZEUS: Not just ten tasks, Hera. Ten heroic tasks!

HERA: Heroic, smoi! It is still ten crummy tasks!

ZEUS: These are tasks that are so difficult that no human could accomplish any one of them.

HERA: Okay, so they are hard things to do. But to become a god when he is done!

ZEUS: Yes! It will be a great ending. The more I think about it, the more I like it! I will finally have my boy sitting by my side.

HERA: *(To herself.)* And he may be the only one sitting by your side... *(With a look of realization, to ZEUS.)* But he has to finish the Labors successfully correct?

ZEUS: Of course, yes, but he is Hercules, all around nice guy and son of the king of the gods - who would be me!

HERA: At Tiryns, huh? Under King Eurystheus...

ZEUS: Hera, I do not like that look on your face! Hera, what are you planning? You stay out of Hercules' Labors! They are between Hercules and King Eurystheus!

Spotlight out on HERA.

ZEUS: HERA! *(To the audience.)* Why do I yell? It has never worked, it never will work. She has never listened to me. I quickly learned the words of survival for any married man - "Yes dear, anything you want dear" - and then I go and do whatever I feel like doing. Works every time!

So, back to today's myth. Hercules went to Tiryns and became a servant to King Eurystheus. King Eurystheus gave Hercules the toughest Labors you could imagine. After each one, Hercules became more of a hero. Now, although each and every one of Hercules' Labors is a story I could tell you, I am going to jump ahead to his ninth Labor, the Belt of Hippolyte. You might be asking yourself, "What is the Belt of Hippolyte?," which would be a very good question. Or, then again, you might be saying "The Belt of Hippolyte, that sounds about as exciting as watching paint dry," but fear not! I think you will like this one. The myth starts with Admete, the daughter of King Eurystheus...

Lights up on stage, which is set as ADMETE's bedroom, a Greek-looking room as elaborate or simple as you would like. This scene could even take place in front of the curtains if there is room. A chair is needed for ADMETE to sit upon. ADMETE and KING EURYSTHEUS are in the room when the lights come up. There are two GUARDS with long spears at a doorway. KING EURYSTHEUS gestures wildly and is animated when he talks.

ADMETE: I will not! I will NOT! I WILL NOT! And YOU CANNOT MAKE ME!

KING EURYSTHEUS: *(Flustered.)* Oh, calm down, sweet Admete, calm down! You know that I, your loving father, would not make you, my loving daughter, go to the party if you did not want to. But it is your mother's party! It is the annual Party of the Queen! You have to go. It would not be right for the daughter of the queen not to go. Your mother insists that you go, and you know how your mother is. Once she makes her mind up, well, she has made up her mind, and nothing is going to change it. Sometimes she has the personality of a mule, she has...

ADMETE: But you are the king, Daddy!

KING EURYSTHEUS: Well, yes, I am the king, but when I talk to your mother... *(Makes a face like a deer-in-the-headlights and stands there.)* I feel more like a deaf and dumb servant, only able to nod occasionally.

ADMETE: Daddy, just march right in there, look her right in the eyes, and tell her that I am not going to the party!

KING EURYSTHEUS: (*Gaining courage.*) March right in there, look her right in the eyes, and...

ADMETE: ...tell her that I am not going!

KING EURYSTHEUS: (*Falling apart.*) Oh in the name of the gods, I cannot. Your mother can be rather scary, Admete. First, her nostrils flare up (*Demonstrates.*) and then she stares at me with that look, you know that look, the one where her face changes shape and she makes even really ugly people look pretty good (*Demonstrates.*) and then she yells at me! No one yells like your mother. She yells so loud it blows my hair back and makes my eyes water.

ADMETE: But you must, Daddy! I cannot stand these parties! They make no sense at all. Everyone stands around and talks and talks and talks about...stupid stuff...like politics, and the price of food, and who has the most gold. I am so boored when I go to these things. It is simply crazy! Instead of parties, they should call them borings.

KING EURYSTHEUS: Yes, yes! I know, olive branch, but that is what we do. You get used to them after awhile, actually.

ADMETE: But I do not want to get used to them! I want to dance, play games, talk to my friends, have fun!

KING EURYSTHEUS: But we are the royal family. We are obligated to have these parties.

ADMETE: Well, I do not care what the royal family has to do. I am not going! I am sixteen now and old enough to make up my own mind.

Both pause.

KING EURYSTHEUS: (*Seeing a chance to convince her.*) You are right. You are sixteen, a beautiful young lady, I might add. And you would do anything for your dear, old, loving Dad, who, if he does not get his daughter to go to this party, will never again be allowed to... Well, Mommy will shut down Daddy... Well, Daddy will not be allowed to...to go to the chariot races! (*Pleading.*) And you know how much Daddy loves to go to the chariot races. There is nothing like teams of horses flying around the track pulling chariots. Just last week there was a terrific crash, and horses and drivers went flying everywhere!

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

- ADMETE:** (*Seeing a way to get what she wants.*) Oh, I know, Daddy!
You do love your chariot races...
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** Yes, yes, I do...
- ADMETE:** ...and I would never do anything to hurt my dear old
Daddy...
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** (*Getting excited, turns away.*) Oh, please,
please, please...
- ADMETE:** ...and only because you want me to go...I will go to the
party.
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** (*Turning towards ADMETE.*) Thank you!
Thank you! Thank you!
- ADMETE:** On one condition.
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** Oh anything, anything at all! Whatever you
want, Admete.
- ADMETE:** I want Hippolyte's Belt.
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** Hippolyte's Belt?
- ADMETE:** Yes, Hippolyte's Belt!
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** As in Hippolyte, the warrior princess of the
Amazon Women?
- ADMETE:** That would be the one.
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** (*Stammering.*) The Belt of Hippolyte is one of
a kind. It is priceless! It is made of the finest leather, decorated
with beautiful jewels. There is none other like it.
- ADMETE:** Exactly, and I want it!
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** Admete, it is out of the question.
- ADMETE:** Then so is the party!
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** There must be something else that you would
like, dearest Admete. Oh, how about a boat? You love the sea!
Daddy can have a boat made just for you!
- ADMETE:** Hippolyte's Belt.
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** I could have your name carved on the side of
the boat. No, on both sides of the boat! In beautiful letters,
"Admete"!
- ADMETE:** The Belt of Hippolyte.
- KING EURYSTHEUS:** How am I supposed to get Hippolyte's Belt?
The Amazon Women live on an island many, many days journey
from here. They are savage warriors! I am sure Princess
Hippolyte will not just give me her Belt.

ADMETE: No, she probably would not give you her Belt, but she might give it to Hercules.

KING EURYSTHEUS: Hercules? Hercules! By the gods, of course, Hercules!

ADMETE: He still has more Labors to perform for you, does he not, Daddy?

KING EURYSTHEUS: That he does! But the party is tomorrow. Even Hercules could not get the Belt of Hippolyte before the party.

ADMETE: All I want is a promise that you will send Hercules for the Belt.

KING EURYSTHEUS: You have my word. I promise! I swear on the gods of Mt. Olympus! I will tell him right after the party.

ADMETE: You will tell him before the party.

KING EURYSTHEUS: But the party is tomorrow!

ADMETE: So I guess you will just have to tell him today.

KING EURYSTHEUS: Today? I cannot tell him today! It takes me a week to get up my courage to speak to him. He is crazy, Admete! He is dangerous! He is stronger than any man on Earth, you know. I am always afraid that he might rip off my arms and my legs when I give him his next Labor. And I really do not want to be without arms and legs. How would I walk? How would I talk? I do so like my legs and my arms!

ADMETE: If you do not tell Hercules today, I will not go to the party, and Mother will be so upset with you, and, oh well, you will not see any more chariot races...

KING EURYSTHEUS: Okay! Okay! I will talk to Hercules today.

ADMETE: *(Giving him a hug and kiss.)* Thank you, Daddy! I love you, Daddy.

ADMETE exits.

KING EURYSTHEUS: *(Shaking his head, looking at audience.)* Tell Hercules today... Ohhhhhh...

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3: THE MARKETPLACE

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

Spotlight on HERA.

HERA: Did I hear correctly? The Belt of Hippolyte? *(Laughs loudly.)*

This has got to be a joke! Hippolyte is the Princess of the Amazon Women. They are my favorite humans on Earth! They are a tribe of only women, no men. They worship me. I have an oracle on their island. I am their queen god. And Hercules has to get Hippolyte's Belt! *(Laughs again.)* He will never get Hippolyte's Belt! Princess Hippolyte would sooner die than give up her precious Belt, especially to a man. I won't even have to sabotage this Labor. My Amazon Women will not let me down. They will take care of Hercules on their own. We are women, hear us roar! Hercules will fail this Labor and never become a god.

Spotlight goes out on HERA. Spotlight up on ZEUS.

ZEUS: So King Eurystheus told Hercules to bring back the Belt of Hippolyte. By this point in time, after eight Labors, Hercules was one heck of a hero among the people of Greece. He was a man's man! And the women, well, it was just amazing. He walked by and the little girls squealed, the teenage girls fell all over him, the young ladies wanted to marry him, and the older women simply...wished that they were younger. *(Reminiscing.)* You do know that back in my day I was a favorite among the ladies myself. I was not like Hercules, but they did like the things I could do... *(Standing.)* They used to call me the "Lightning Bolt Kid" *(Lightning and thunder.)* when I was younger. Hercules got his magnetic charm from his dear old dad. Yes, my apple did not fall far from my tree. *(Coming back to the story.)* Onward, yes, onward. The people of Tiryns always wanted to know what was happening with Hercules...

Lights up on the stage, which is set as the marketplace, full of carts with meat, cheese, vegetables, jewelry, dresses, vases, hats, robes, clothes, knives, swords, bows and arrows, etc. You could include anything else which might make it look like an ancient marketplace scene, such as animals on leashes (goats, pigs, chickens in crates, sheep, a monkey on someone's shoulder, a snake around someone's neck, a parrot on someone's shoulder, etc.) or a man lying on a table getting a massage from a woman. There are acrobats juggling, standing on one another's shoulders, doing walkovers, backbends; perhaps a fake sword-swallower. Many people are milling, wandering around slowly.

HERCULES enters. There is much excitement with several verbalizations of his name when he enters. A bunch of women wave to him, some squeal, some crowd around him touching his muscles, etc.

CROWD 1 (F): Oh, Hercules! We have not seen you lately.

CROWD 2 (F): And you know how much we like to see you!

CROWD 3 (F): Yes, Hercules, have you been hiding from us?

HERCULES: No, not at all. King Eurystheus has been keeping me very busy.

CROWD 4: Hercules, tell us of your latest adventure!

CROWD 5: Tells us again about how you killed the Cretan Bull!

CROWD 6: Hercules! What brings you into the marketplace?

HERCULES: By the order of your king, I have a new Labor to perform.

CROWD 7: Tell us, Hercules!

CROWD 8: What is it?

CROWD 9: Is it difficult?

CROWD 10: Hercules' Labors are not difficult, they are impossible!

CROWD 11: No normal man could accomplish any one of Hercules' Labors. But Hercules has completed eight of them.

CROWD 12: And saved the city of Tiryns more than once!

Cheers from the crowd. As the cheers quiet down...

CROWD 13: So what is the new Labor, Hercules?

HERCULES: King Eurystheus' daughter, Admete, wants the Belt of Hippolyte.

CROWD 14: The Belt of Hippolyte!

CROWD 15: Why, Hippolyte is the princess of the Amazon Women.

HERCULES: Yes, she is. And I must get it from her and bring it back to King Eurystheus.

CROWD 16: But Hercules, the Amazon Women are warriors. Savage warriors!

CROWD 17 (M): Savage warriors scare me! Women scare me! Savage warrior women really scare me!

CROWD 18: My cousin's uncle on my father's side once removed said that they are the best warriors in all the land. They have never lost a battle!

CROWD 19: They say their skills are far superior to that of any man.

CROWD 20: I heard that there are hundreds of them.

CROWD 21: I heard thousands!

CROWD 22: You cannot possibly battle them all alone, Hercules!

HERCULES: But I must and I will. This is my assigned Labor. I am obligated by the words of god Apollo.

CROWD 23: Did King Eurystheus say that you must go alone?

HERCULES: No, but...

From this point until the end of the scene, the MARKETPLACE PEOPLE watch from upstage positions of HERCULES and his men.

THESIUS: *(Coming forward.)* Then we will go with you, Hercules! We will not let you fight the Amazon Women alone. Who is with Hercules and me?

A very pitiful response is heard throughout the crowd, except for HYPERMEDES.

HYPERMEDES: *(Upstage, jumping up and down.)* Me! Me! Pick me!

THESIUS: Hypermedes! I knew I could count on you.

HYPERMEDES: *(Always speaks quickly, but clearly.)* I can go? I can help Hercules fight the Amazon Women? Yes! Yes! Yes! When do we leave? How long will we be gone? Is it a long trip? You sure I can go? I need to go pack! *(Runs off.)*

THESIUS: That makes two, so far. Myself and Hypermedes. Who else?

Some grumbling and shuffling from the crowd.

THESIUS: What is wrong with you people? This is Hercules, the hero of Tiryns!

Another less than enthusiastic response. THESIUS points at DEMON in the crowd.

THESIUS: What about you, Demon?

DEMON: *(Comes forward a little, for all to see.)* Demon likes Hercules, but Demon has his sheep to tend to. Demon's sheep need him here. Demon really likes his sheep.

THESIUS: And you would not have any sheep if Hercules had not saved them from the Nemean Lion.

DEMON: Yes, Thesius is right. If it weren't for Hercules, Demon's sheep would have been killed by the Nemean Lion. *(Makes a lion face and claws at the audience when he says "Nemean Lion.")* Okay, Demon will go. Can Demon bring along Demon's sheep? Demon would like to bring along his sheep.

THESIUS: Yes, Demon, I am sure that there will be room for you to bring along a sheep or two. Good! That makes three of us who are willing to help Hercules. *(Pointing to AGAINOD in the crowd.)* Againod, you are a man who knows right from wrong. Are you with us?

AGAINOD: *(Comes forward a bit for all to see.)* But these are the Amazon Women, the Amazon Women! They are savage warriors, savage warriors! I am safe here in Tiryns, safe here in Tiryns.

THESIUS: Againod! If it were not for Hercules, no one in Tiryns would be safe! Hercules saved us from the Lernean Hydra. Surely you remember?

AGAINOD: Yes, the Hydra, the Hydra. No one was able to destroy the Hydra, no one. Only Hercules, only Hercules. Count me in, count me in! I will fight the Amazon Women with Hercules, fight the Amazon Women with Hercules.

THESIUS: Againod, you are a good man! This looks better all the time. Four so far! Who else? We need more!

KLUTZAKLES, EURIPIDES and IOTA walk in. IOTA is clearly blind, walks with a stick, always looking straight ahead. KLUTZAKLES is a klutz; he stumbles and falls as he says...

KLUTZAKLES: You need more of what? *(Gets up and brushes himself off.)*

THESIUS: Men to go with Hercules to the island of the Amazon Women!

KLUTZAKLES: Did you say the island of the Amazon Women?

THESIUS: Yes, the island of the Amazon Women.

KLUTZAKLES: That is a tribe of all women, is it not?

THESIUS: Yes, all women.

KLUTZAKLES: As in no men are there?

THESIUS: True, there are no men there.

KLUTZAKLES: *(Drops to his knees.)* Then take me with you! An island of all women! The gods have answered my dreams! Thank you, Poseidon, thank you, Hermes, thank you, Zeus!

THESIUS: These are warrior women, Klutzakles. We will have to fight them.

EURIPEDES: *(Crazy and exaggerated.)* Fight? If there is going to be a fight, I will be there! Fighting! I am good at fighting. *(Dances around like a boxer. Changes stance, stands straight.)* What's for lunch? Did we eat yet? I like eggs. Do you like eggs? When you put two olives in them, they look like faces.

IOTA: And why might Hercules be fighting the Amazon Women?

HERCULES: I must get the Belt of Hippolyte, Iota.

IOTA: Ah, Hercules, you are here! I thought I picked up your smell. When one is blind, the old nose gets better and better, you know. Why must you get Hippolyte's Belt?

THESIUS: King Eurystheus has assigned it as Hercules' ninth Labor.

IOTA: Ah! Another Labor for our hero! You would think that Hercules has done enough. (*Not facing HERCULES at all, he swings his stick, almost hitting people.*) If you need us, Hercules, we are with you!

THESIUS: Hercules! We are with you on your quest for the Belt of Hippolyte, the Princess of the Amazon Women.

All of HERCULES' MEN are down center except for HYPERMEDES.

HERCULES: Friends! You have touched my heart with your bravery. This is a dangerous adventure. The journey will be long. We will sail through waters we have never sailed through, to places we have never been.

KLUTZAKLES: To women who have never seen men! The gods are with me today. This is too good for words.

HERCULES: Klutzakles, you may not come back alive.

KLUTZAKLES: Alive! Hah! They will love me! You wait and see.

HYPERMEDES runs back on.

HYPERMEDES: Did I miss anything? I am all packed! Who else is going?

THESIUS: I have counted seven who will join Hercules on his ninth Labor.

HYPERMEDES: (*Runs back and forth across the stage in front of everyone.*) Seven! Seven is a good number. Not quite as good as eight or nine, but better than five or six. I am ready! When do we leave?

HERCULES: Friends, we will leave on the third dawn from today. Be prepared, we do not know what we will be up against!

AGAINOD: Seven against one hundred savage warrior women with superior skills to any man, superior skills to any man...

KLUTZAKLES: I like those odds. Seven men, one hundred women!

DEMON: Demon needs to pick out sheep for the journey.

EURIPEDES: Did I show you the rash I got the other day? (*Shows part of his stomach. As he does so, HERCULES and all of his men make a face and begin to walk away.*) Oh baby, does it smell...like cheese. (*Realizing...*) Yes, cheese! That's it! I want cheese for lunch.

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4: THE JOURNEY

Spotlight on both ZEUS and HERA.

HERA: Those stupid, stupid women. How can they fall for Hercules? So he is strong. So he is good looking. So he has done eight heroic tasks. I just do not see what they like about him.

ZEUS: Hera, there was a day when you used to fall for strong, good looking guys.

HERA: Never! Not !!

ZEUS: Yes, you! You fell for me, did you not?

HERA: I was young and naive. I did not know anything.

ZEUS: And it was the best time of your life.

HERA: Hah! If that was the best time of my life, then...then...

ZEUS: Then? Hera, you are as beautiful today as you were two thousand years ago.

HERA: (*Weakening.*) You really think so?

ZEUS: Absolutely! Why else would I say it?

HERA: (*Thinks that ZEUS is trying to trick her.*) Oh, I see! You are trying to soften me up. Trying to keep me away from Hercules and the Amazon Women. Well, it will not work!

Spotlight out on HERA.

ZEUS: Hera! You know, I cannot win ever. I try to be nice, and what do I get? Smacked back down to Hera's reality, where women rule and men should not even be there. And you thought being married was rough as a human. I have to put up with this for eternity - which is forever, and ever, and ever, and ever... There are times when this immortality thing really - what do you say today? Suctions! Our myth continues to unfold...Hercules had a few friends who were venturing to the island of the Amazon Women with him. Quite the interesting group of friends...

Lights up on the stage, which is set with small benches running from upstage to downstage - one bench for each of HERCULES' MEN. HERCULES is standing. Upstage is the inside of the boat wall. There are oars (although these only have to be half oars since the ends are not seen). There is a hatchway with a hinged door facing the floor. There is a drum which THESIUS is using to keep beat for the rowing. A sky backdrop is upstage of the boat. HERCULES, and HERCULES' MEN are on the boat; everyone is rowing. Everyone is in unison with the drum except HYPERMEDES, who is rowing much faster than anyone else.

HERCULES: Demon, how are your sheep doing?

DEMON gets up from rowing, goes over and opens the hatchway door, looks in.

DEMON: Demon's sheep are doing fine Hercules. Demon appreciates being able to take Demon's sheep along to see the Amazon Women.

HERCULES: Demon, it is the least I can do for a friend who is willing to take this journey with me.

AGAINOD: How much longer, Hercules, how much longer?

HERCULES: I do not know, Againod. We are to sail to the left of the sun as it rises. We will pass many islands. With the gods' help, we will see an island with two matching volcanic peaks, unique in appearance and shape. That will be the island of the Amazon Women.

THESIUS: The island is secluded. There are few who have visited it.

IOTA: The stories say that the Amazon Women have little contact with the outside world. They do not know the ways of the civilization. They may be savages in nature.

EURIPEDES: I am hungry. Is it lunch time yet? Is anyone else hungry? Did we bring along spanikopita? I like spanikopita. And pita bread. Yes, spanikopita and pita bread!

THESIUS: We will catch fish, Euripedes.

HYPERMEDES: Catch fish? (*Jumps up.*) Fish! Fish sound great! I will get them for us. (*Runs to the front of the boat and dives over the upstage boat wall onto a mat.*)

HERCULES: (*Looks over the side, as we hear splashing. In disbelief...*) In the name of Poseidon! HYPERMEDES, YOU CANNOT SWIM!

HYPERMEDES: (*Can be heard, but sounds as if he's submerged in water.*) That's okay. I am not swimming, I am catching fish.

HERCULES: (*To the rest.*) Friends, help me bring him back in!

IOTA reaches off the front of the stage...

IOTA: Hypermedes, grab my hand! My hand, Hypermedes!

The rest of HERCULES' MEN pull HYPERMEDES over the upstage side boat wall, but not in the place he jumped over. The current and movement of the boat would have taken him to the other end of the boat. They lean over the boat wall, grab his clothes and hoist him back into the boat. HYPERMEDES is sputtering and he is wet (or at least his head is wet, which will give the impression that he was in the water).

HYPERMEDES: What are you guys doing? Why did you pull me in? I was fishing! (*Shakes his head and gets everyone wet. They all react.*)

THESIUS: No, Hypermedes, what you were doing is called drowning.

They all head back to their oars.

IOTA: Hercules, do you think these Amazon Women are as skilled in battle as the stories we hear?

HERCULES: There are so many stories about the skills of the Amazon Women, Iota, it is difficult not to believe them.

AGAINOD: Yes, I think they are true, I think they are true. I hear they have supernatural powers, supernatural powers!

HERCULES: They may have skills like those which we have never seen. They may have their own gods which look over them, protect them. We may have our hands full.

KLUTZAKLES: That is exactly what I want. I want my hands full of women. Exotic, wild, savage women!

THESIUS: They say the Amazon Women have never lost a battle. They have defeated everyone who has tried to conquer them.

HYPERMEDES: But how can we lose? We have Hercules! Half-man, half-god. Stronger than any man on Earth.

EURIPEDES: (*Looking up and getting very excited.*) Oh, seagulls! Look at all the seagulls! I like seagulls. I will count them. One, two, three, four, five...

HERCULES: Men, we are not here to count seagulls or to conquer the Amazon Women! We are here for Hippolyte's Belt. But I do not think that Princess Hippolyte will give me her prized belt readily. And my strength may be of no help to us in getting the Belt.

IOTA: Hercules, what do you think about asking them for Hippolyte's Belt?

EURIPEDES: Forget the asking! Are we not men? Men do not ask. Men are stupid. Real men fight for what they want! We will engage them in hand to hand battle. (*Realizing...*) That's it! Quiche! Yes, quiche for lunch. Real men eat quiche.

HERCULES: All of you! We will be prepared for battle, but we will not make the first strike. We will defend ourselves, but in the names of the gods, I would like no bloodshed. I have had too much bloodshed in my life.

During these last words, THESIUS has gone to a wooden barrel and reached in deeply for water.

THESIUS: Hercules, we are low on water. Unless we find the Amazon Women within a day or two, we will run out.

HERCULES: We cannot risk it, Thesius. I do not know how much farther we have. We will stop at the next island and replenish our water supply.

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 5: WATER

Spotlight on both ZEUS and HERA.

HERA: They need water. And would it not be a pity if the water they find is poisonous...

ZEUS: Hera! Poison water! Now you sound like an evil stepmother from a fairy tale. But I guess if the shoe fits...

HERA: How dare you call me a stepmother!

ZEUS: (*Commandingly.*) Hera, you will not poison the water of an entire island!

HERA: Always thinking that you can boss me around. What are you going to do? (*Amused.*) Throw a lightning bolt at it? Then it would be exploding poison water! (*Laughs.*)

ZEUS: I can do a lot more than throw lightning bolts.

HERA: Oh yes, I know you can, but the only thing that you are good at is throwing lightning bolts.

ZEUS: I am not! Well, yes, I am! Hera! (*Exasperated.*) Why do you torment me so?

HERA: Do you really want me to explain to you what you did? Again?

ZEUS: Oh, never mind! Just stay away from Hercules' water.

HERA: I will not and you cannot make me!

Both spotlights out.

Lights up on the stage, which may be set as an island/forest/beach, though a blank stage is fine. Make sure the set is not the same as the one for the island of the AMAZON WOMEN. There are young children (Fourth graders would work well) across the front of the stage. They are barefoot or in sandals, dressed in primitive clothing (very ripped shorts, ripped shirts), their hair is wild, and their faces are dirty. They are all looking out at the audience.

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

ISLAND CHILD 1: (*Pointing to where HERCULES and his men are coming in.*) Look! People!

ISLAND CHILD 2: They are all big people.

HERCULES and his men enter carrying the wooden water barrel (or goatskins or large jugs). All the children rush over to them, gawking at them. They circle them. Some poke the men, touch them (especially their swords and HERCULES' club). They giggle, laugh. The children's lines cut off the answers from HERCULES and his men.

ISLAND CHILD 3: Who are you?

HERCULES: Well, I am the mighty...

ISLAND CHILD 4: Where did you come from?

THESIUS: We have journeyed from...

ISLAND CHILD 5: Why are you only men?

IOTA: They sound like...

ISLAND CHILD 6: Are there women coming?

KLUTZAKLES: Women? Where?

ISLAND CHILD 7: Do you want to climb trees with us?

HYPERMEDES: Climb trees! Oh, that's my favorite! (*Starts to exit quickly.*)

HERCULES: Hypermedes, wait!

HYPERMEDES: (*Returns, but really wants to go climb trees.*) But the trees are calling for us. They need us! They must be climbed!

HERCULES: We are here for water, Hypermedes. (*HYPERMEDES is shaking with his hands clasped, begging to go. HERCULES watches him beg, then changes his mind.*) Oh, never mind! Go climb trees, Hypermedes. We will find you when we are done getting water.

HYPERMEDES and a few children run off.

ISLAND CHILD 8: Why do you need water? You just came from the ocean.

ISLAND CHILD 9: Which is full of water!

THESIUS: We need water which we can drink.

ISLAND CHILD 10: Water to drink? Oh, we have plenty of that!

HERCULES: May we have some?

ISLAND CHILD 11: Sure, take all that you want.

AGAINOD: Where are the adults, the adults?

ISLAND CHILD 12: Adults? Oh you mean big people like you.

There are no big people on our island.

KLUTZAKLES: No adults! How can that be?

DEMON: Who takes care of you?

ISLAND CHILD 13: We do not need anyone to take care of us.

HERCULES: An island of only children?

EURIPEDES: We have landed on an island of only children, and we are going to an island of only women. Next stop, an island of only men! Then what? An island of only sheep?

DEMON: Demon would like that island!

EURIPEDES: And then an island of only centaurs, and then only nymphs, and then only goats, and then only...

THESIUS: (*Cutting off EURIPEDES*) Euripedes! We should get the water.

HERCULES: Yes. Would you take us to the water you drink?

ISLAND CHILD 14: Sure, come with us!

ISLAND CHILD 15: Will you play a game with us before you leave?

HERCULES: What kinds of games do you play?

ISLAND CHILD 16: Good games!

HERCULES: Well then, the water first, then a game.

All the children take the arms of HERCULES and his men and drag them upstage. BLACKOUT. As soon as everyone is upstage, the lights come back up and everyone walks downstage, including HYPERMEDES. The water barrel (or goatskins or jugs) appear full of water.

HERCULES: Take the water to the boat, men.

HERCULES' MEN begin to exit, with IOTA going the opposite direction; THESIUS retrieves him.

HERCULES: Thank you for the water.

ISLAND CHILD 17: But you said that you would play a game with us!

HERCULES: Oh, yes, I did. Wait men, a game before we leave!

All the men put down their water in an out-of-the-way place.

HYPERMEDES: A game! Oh, I love games! What are we playing? I cannot wait! Who is in charge?

ISLAND CHILD 18: The game is called Hercules of the Cliff. It is named after the strongest man on Earth, Hercules. (*All the children make muscles with their arms and say "HERCULES!"*) Have you heard of him?

THESIUS: (*Pointing at HERCULES.*) Why, didn't you know? This is...

HERCULES: (*Cuts off THESIUS. Smiling.*) Thesius, wait... No, we have not heard of this man, Hercules. How strong is he?

ISLAND CHILD 19: Oh, he is so strong he can lift up a horse. Or a rock bigger than a man. Or your whole boat. With all of you in it!

HERCULES: He sounds really strong.

All of HERCULES' MEN nod, smile, and chuckle.

HYPERMEDES: Come on! Come on! I cannot wait any longer. I want to play! How do we play this game?

ISLAND CHILD 20: Well, two people stand on the edge of our cliff. There, and there, and there... (*Points to the front of the stage.*) ...and everyone tries to push these people (*Points.*) off the cliff, before they (*Points.*) get pushed off the cliff!

ISLAND CHILD 21: Once you are pushed off, you are done. The last person standing on the cliff is Hercules.

DEMON: That sounds very dangerous! I wonder if that is what happened to all of the adults around here?

IOTA: How far down is the fall off the cliff?

AGAINOD: Only about 2 cubits, about 2 cubits.

EURIPEDES: I always like a good fight. Let's play! I am ready.

This may sound crazy, but with a little planning it plays well (unless, of course, your stage is eight feet off the ground). This must be rehearsed slowly at first, then more rapidly as everyone understands what is happening. There are two mats on the ground so that the falls are not painful. Have the children land on their feet and fall to the mat. Two groups form upstage of the two people on the edge of the stage. EURIPEDES is the first one up. He gets pushed off right away. On his way down he says, "Hey, I was not ready" and everyone laughs. Everyone is laughing and cheering during the game, especially those who have already been thrown off the cliff. Two people should grab each others arms lightly, and struggle briefly so that the action is rapid. When KLUTZAKLES goes up, he trips and falls off the stage without anyone touching him. The last two standing are HERCULES and a child. Everyone is cheering. This battle lasts several seconds. HERCULES finally pushes the child off the stage. All the children and HERCULES' MEN climb back on stage.

ISLAND CHILD 22: You are pretty strong. But not as strong as the real Hercules!

HERCULES: I am sure that I am not as strong as the real Hercules. Maybe someday I will meet the real Hercules.

THESIUS: We must be going!

IOTA: We are going to the island of the Amazon Women.

ISLAND CHILD 23: They are the famous warrior women. *(Points.)* Their island is that way! On a clear day, you can see it.

THESIUS: Friends, we are close to our destination!

HERCULES' MEN talk excitedly among themselves.

KLUTZAKLES: Then we must be off! The women are waiting for me!

HERCULES: *(To the children.)* Thank you for the water. We are grateful for it.

HERCULES and his men hurry off stage.

ISLAND CHILD 24: *(Calling after them.)* Come back and see us again! We will play a different game next time.

HYPERMEDES: *(Runs back onstage.)* More games! Hercules, we have to come back! *(Runs off stage.)* Please Hercules, please Hercules! When can we come back Hercules? Hercules!

ALL ISLAND CHILDREN: *(Looking after HERCULES and his men.)* HERCULES? *(All look at the audience, shaking their heads no, and saying...)* NO!

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 6: THE LANDING

Spotlight on ZEUS.

ZEUS: The Amazon Women. I forgot to explain them to you. The Amazon Women were not named after the Amazon River. They have nothing to do with the great Amazon River. We Greeks did not know that South America existed. After one more day at sea, Hercules and his men finally landed on the island inhabited by the Amazon Women...

Spotlight out. Sounds of ocean waves breaking, and tropical birds. Lights up on stage, which has a tropical forest backdrop - with trees, bushes, and rocks, etc. as props across the stage. Blending in with the trees, bushes, and rocks, etc. are the AMAZON WOMEN, well camouflaged. All of their faces are painted, and/or in masks (designs, feathers, animals, leaves). They are all motionless as HERCULES and his men enter.

HERCULES walks on from SL or SR, dragging a long, thick rope behind him. He prepares to pull on the rope. The rope is loose at this point. As HERCULES pulls, the rope becomes taut with the end of the rope off stage being connected to the front of the boat, about six feet high. As HERCULES continues to pull, the front of the boat becomes visible. He ties the boat rope to a tree or places a large boulder on the rope. At this point, THESIUS is at the front of the boat looking at HERCULES. All of HERCULES' MEN have a sword in their belt behind them.

HERCULES: Throw me my club, Thesius. (*THESIUS, with a good deal of effort, lifts a large club from the deck of the boat and throws it to HERCULES as best as he can. HERCULES catches it in one hand with ease.*)

THESIUS: We have arrived, Hercules! (*He prepares to jump off the boat. HYPERMEDES jumps off the boat onto stage before THESIUS.*)

HYPERMEDES: We are here! We are here, are we not, Hercules? I mean this is the place, yes? (*Pointing.*) Two volcanoes, just like you said. So where are those Amazon Women? They must be here somewhere! I will go look for them. (*Runs across and off stage.*)

HERCULES: (*As HYPERMEDES is running.*) Yes, Hypermedes, we are here. This is the place, but I do not know where the Amazon Women are. Going to look for them is a good idea. (*To THESIUS.*) Thesius, join me!

THESIUS jumps onto the stage, and looks around. KLUTZAKLES jumps and falls off the front of the boat. He lands on the ground. THESIUS goes over to help him up. KLUTZAKLES gets up slowly.

THESIUS: (*Looking all around.*) Hercules, they may be savage warriors, but, in the name of Aphrodite, their island is beautiful!

HERCULES: That it is, Thesius.

KLUTZAKLES: But not as beautiful as they are going to be! There is nothing more beautiful than lots and lots of women. You wait and see. Women! (*Demonstrating each shape.*) Tall women, short women, big women, little women, round women, square women...

THESIUS: (*Interrupting THESIUS*) What is a square woman, Klutzakles?

KLUTZAKLES: Why, one that is not round, Thesius! Come out, come out, wherever you are! (*KLUTZAKLES searches the stage for women.*)

AGAINOD: (*Jumps onto stage.*) I am glad to be on land again, on land again. It has been a long journey, a long journey.

HERCULES: But we are here, Againod! The Island of the Amazon Women!



GREEN ROOM PRESS

*Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:
HERCULES, LABOR 9, THE BELT OF HIPPOLYTE
by Craig W. Stump.*

*For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script,
please contact us at:*

GREEN ROOM PRESS, INC.
customerservice@greenroompress.com
www.greenroompress.com