

## Scene 1: Hercules is Born

Apollo: Long, long ago, in the faraway land of ancient Greece, there was a golden age of powerful gods and extraordinary heroes. And the greatest and strongest hero of all was the mighty Hercules. But what is the measure of a true hero? That is what our story is-

Muse 1 (Kali): Will you listen to him? He's making the story sound like some Greek tragedy.

Muse 2 (Marie-Jeanne): Lighten up, dude.

Muse 3 (Ann): We'll take it from here.

Apollo: Wait a minute, wait a minute! Why are there only 3 of you?? There are 5 Muses, people! Oh for Zeus's sake! Hold on a minute! I gotta fix this! **[pulls phone out of pocket, dials, speaks into it impatiently]**

Yeah, casting? Apollo here. I said I needed FIVE Muses. I only count 3. Yeah, so that means I need 2 more. Muses. M-U-S-E-S. MUSES! [shouts]. Well OF COURSE it has to be right away! The show already started!!! Yeah, okay buddy.

**[a Muse appears runs onstage beside him]**

Muse 4 (Oceane): Hey, are you Mister Apollo?

Apollo: You're here! Great! Nice costume. Now go stand over there with the others. Anyone else with you?

Muse 5 (Jahsai): **[walks onstage wearing moose costume]** One moose, reporting for duty!

Apollo: Moose? I said MUSE.

Muse 5 (Jahsai): What's a muse? I said MOOSE.

Apollo: Oh boy. When I get my hands on that guy from casting.... **[pulls out phone, dials again angrily]** Hello? So it's Apollo again. What in Hades are you people doing over there?! Oh, okay. Yeah. **[hangs up, puts phone in pocket]**

[turns to Muse 5] Well, I guess we're stuck with you. Something about Can-Con??? Never mind – we'll get you a toga. Go over there with the others. We're starting right now! Take it away, ladies! And er – friends!

**[the Muses line up in position]**

Apollo: [clears throat]. Long, long ago, in the faraway land of ancient Greece, there was a golden age of powerful gods and extraordinary heroes. And the greatest and strongest hero of all was the mighty Hercules. But what is the measure of a true hero? That is what our story is-

Muse 1 (Kali): Will you listen to him? He's making the story sound like some Greek tragedy.

Muse 2 (Marie-Jeanne): Lighten up, dude.

Muse 3 (Ann): We'll take it from here.

Muse 4 (Oceane): We are the Muses. Goddesses of the arts and proclaimers of the heroes.

Muse 5 (Jahsai): Heroes like Hercules.

Muse 1: Honey, don't you mean "hunk-ules"?

[Muses together: whistle, woooo, stomp feet]

Muse 2: Oh yeah, he was a FINE looking demi-god semi-immortal freakishly strong human being.

Muse 4: Our story actually begins long before Hercules, before the dawn of time...

**[Muses begin Song and Dance Scene for Gospel Truth I]**

**[Gospel Truth I Ends and Muses dance off-stage]**

**[Curtain opens to the sight of Mount Olympus. Apollo jumps up on the stage]**

Apollo: Mount Olympus, home sweet home of the gods. We don't all get along all the time, so we don't really hang out. But the birth of a new baby to Zeus, the

king of the gods, and Hera, his queen, means that we all drop in to pay our respects. No exceptions. Hera is the goddess of the home. She is a delightful hostess, but believe me – when she invites you, you’d better BE there. With a GIFT. And not a cheap one.

**[Hera is standing beside the bassinet of baby Hercules]**

Hera: My little Hercules! [cute voice]

**[Zeus smiles and looks down at Hercules and puts out a finger to touch his cheek]**

Zeus: Aww! Look at him! Look how cute he is! Just like his mama. Ouch!

Hera: And strong, like his dad!

Zeus: True! He’s got quite a grip! [pulls his hand out of the cradle with difficulty, rubs hand like it hurts]

**[One by one the gods and goddesses step forward to present gifts for the baby]**

Athena: Welcome, baby brother! My gift to you is courage. You will need it, for when people understand your strength, they will challenge you.

Hera: How thoughtful, Athena.

Zeus: Thank you! Courage is a great gift.

Aphrodite: My gift for my new baby brother is beauty. May he be as chiselled as a statue, with a face like a supermodel – more handsome than any god alive.

Hera: Lovely, Aprodite.

Zeus: Thanks – [Apollo interrupts]

Apollo: Hey! I don’t know if I like that, Aphrodite! It’s already hard enough for me to compete with a darling, little baby for all the attention in the room!

Artemis: Oh boy, Apollo. Jealous already of our new baby brother?

Apollo: I’m joking, Artemis.

Artemis: Yeah, right! Your ego won't let you joke about your good looks.

Zeus: Your gifts, please, my favourite twins?

Apollo: Me first. [shoves Artemis lightly, who shoves him back]

Artemis: No me! [addressing the cradle] My gift to you, baby brother, is kinship with all the animals of Earth. Even the fiercest ones will be no problem for you to handle.

Apollo: Nice! And MY gift to you, baby bro, is healing. If any of those wild animals Artemis has "blessed" you with should, I dunno, BITE you or something, you will heal quickly and well. [Artemis smacks his arm]

Artemis: You are SO dumb.

Zeus: [talking over them]. Alright, alright you two. Enough!

Hera: Thank you, Artemis and Apollo, for the thoughtful gifts.

Zeus: Ah, Ares! Kind of you to come.

Ares: Yeah, well, I didn't want to. But we both know that Hera doesn't take excuses.

Hera: It's royal protocol, Ares.

Ares: I'm the God of War. I don't like baby showers.

Zeus: Oh-kay! That's enough, Ares. Don't start a fight here.

Ares: Anyway, here's my gift. [hands Hera a sword]. It's not magical or anything, he'll have to learn to use it when he's bigger. If he's strong, he's gonna have to fight.

Hera: [strained] Thank you, Ares.

Ares: Hey! Don't give me any attitude! I put a lot of thought into that gift!

Hera: [louder]. I said, THANK YOU, ARES. [Ares steps back]

Ares: You don't have to tell me twice!

Zeus: [to Hera] Well, it IS a nice sword. Forged by Hephaestus no doubt. [Hera rolls her eyes]

**[Hermes rushes in, late, holding flowers, runs past the gods and goddesses.]**

Hermes: Whoa! Excuse me! Coming through!

Hera: Why Hermes, they're lovely!

Hermes: Well, I tried to deliver them, FTD, you know? But when the woman wouldn't accept them. The flowers are for you, Hera. My actual gift to baby Hercules is athletic ability. May he be and a team-player and a good sport.

Hera: Thank you very much.

Zeus: Thank you, Hermes! **[clears his throat, spreads his arms to speak]** Everyone? On behalf of my son, I want to thank you all for your wonderful gifts. The birth of a new god is a blessed occasion, and Hera and I appreciate you putting your differences aside to attend our celebration. With all of you in his corner, Hercules will surely lead a charmed life!

Poseidon: One last gift?

Zeus: Yes, brother. Say, where is Hades? He said he'd be here. Anyway, Poseidon and I have cooked up a little collaboration for Hercules!

**[Zeus turns and begins moving his arms as if modeling clay, but with clouds instead – Poseidon gestures with his trident, adding to the mixture]**

Zeus: We'll take a little cirrus and a touch of nimbostratus and a dash of cumulus and.... What's that, Poseidon?

Poseidon: Sea water, of course.

**[Zeus turns back to reveal a tiny horse with wings and places it down next to Hercules]**

Zeus: His name is Pegasus and he's all yours son!

**[All the gods and goddesses clap their appreciation. Hera shakes Poseidon's hand]**

**[Hades walks on stage to centre, clapping after the others stop. The others visibly tense]**

Hades: How sentimental. Just like a Hallmark movie. You know I haven't been this choked up since I had a hunk of moussaka caught in my throat!

**[Hades moves towards Hercules]**

Hades: Wow! What a turn-out! When Zeus calls, you all jump to comply, don't you? Toadies and hypocrites. I say that like it's a bad thing.

**[Hades is now right beside Hercules's cradle staring down at him]**

Zeus: [oblivious to everyone's discomfort]. So Hades, I'm glad you finally made it. Tell me, how are things in the underworld?

Hades: Oh you wanna make conversation? Well, everything's just fine, you know, peachy-keen! Things in the Underworld are a little dark, a little gloomy and as always, full of dead people. But whatcha gonna do?!

**[Hades pulls a skull-shaped lollipop from his robe and goes to give it to Hercules]**

Hades: Here's a sucker for the little sucker, eh? Want some candy, baby?

**[Hades put the lollipop close and then pulls hand back quickly and howls in pain, while holding his index finger]**

Hades: Sheesh! I think he bit me!

**[Zeus smiles, laughs and hugs Hades with a big hug. Hera reaches into the cradle and removes the lollipop, holding it like it's dirty]**

Zeus: Come on Hades don't be a stiff. Why don't you join in on the celebration?

**[Hades pulls free of the hug]**

Hades: Hey, love to, babe, but unlike you gods lounging about up here, I regrettably have a full-time gig. You know the one – when you, Poseidon and I drew lots, and I got the short straw? The Underworld? So... I can't. I'd love to, but can't.

Zeus: **[laughing]** You ought to slow down down there, Hades, you'll work yourself to death... Hah! Work yourself to death!

**[All the other Gods laugh]**

**[Hades looks annoyed]**

**[Poseidon and Zeus high-five each other]**

**[Hades shakes his head and talks to himself facing the audience]**

Hades: Laugh it up, Thunder Boy and Water Weirdo. One of these days, ALL of the realms – earth, sky, sea AND underworld – will be MINE. As it should be. After all, I got all the brains in the family. I can wait until the timing is just right, then WHAMMO, you and all our dysfunctional relations will never know what hit you.

**[Curtains close – Apollo bursts through]**

**[Muses reappear in front of the curtains and sit on the lip of the stage]**

Apollo: So Hercules's baby shower was a success. But as always on Mount Olympus, trouble was brewing.

Muse 3: If there's one god you do NOT want to get steamed up, it's Hades.

Muse 4: He had an EVIL plan.

**[Muses sing the Gospel Truth II]**

**[Muses finish singing the Gospel Truth II and leave the stage]**

**[Underworld Pain and Panic enter on stage as well as the Fates on the opposite side]**

Hades: **[enters scene, shouting]:** Pain! Panic!

**[Pain and Panic drop what they are doing and scurry over towards Hades as they trip and fall over each other and then get up and salute Hades.]**

Pain: Reporting for duty O Great Lord of the Underworld, sir!

Panic: At your service, your Heinousness!

Pain: What wickedness have you got planned for today, sir?

Panic: [excitedly] Mayhem? Chaos? Torture? Suffering?

Hades: Okay, minions. Geez, settle down. You're like the yuckiest puppies ever. Just let me know the instant the Fates arrive.

Pain: The Fates?

Hades: Yeah – you know – three really creepy dudes, weird predictions, big pair of scissors cutting threads of life, sending souls to me every few minutes...

Panic: [like he's guessing the correct answer in school, puts hand up] Oh! Oh! I know! The Fates! [Pain high fives him]

Hades: So, we're clear: Just. Tell. Me. When. The. Fates. Arrive.

Pain: The Fates.

Hades: You're KILLIN' me. [face palm] Yes. THE FATES.

Panic: The Fates are right over there! [pleased with himself]

Hades: [yells]. WHAT?! The Fates are HERE and you didn't tell me?!

[Pain and Panic drop to the ground and bow frantically]

Pain and Panic: We are worms! Worthless worms!

Hades: I cannot believe I pay you two for your "help" [air quotes].

Pain: You don't pay us, sir.

Panic: That's right! We work for the fun of it! We work for free! We are at your service!

Pain: We are worms!

Panic: We're not worthy!

Hades: ARGH. [stalks away in disgust]. Memo to self: MAIM them after my meeting! [addresses the Fates, briskly]. Gentlemen! I'm so sorry that I am...

**[Hades shakes his head in disgust, walks by the two and heads towards the Fates]**

Atropos (L-C): Late!

Clotho (Christian): We knew you would be!

Lachesis (Carter): We know everything!

Clotho: Past!

Lachesis: Present!

Atropos: And Future! **[turns to the audience]** Indoor plumbing - it's gonna be big **[winks]**.

Hades: Okay Fates. So I was just up on Mount Olympus...

Clotho: We know!

Hades: ... at a baby shower, because my esteemed brother Zeus has a new baby...

Lachesis: Boy! We know!

Hades: I KNOW! I know that you know! So let me just ask: is this kid gonna mess up my plans or what? Tell me.

Clotho: We cannot reveal the future!

**[Hades turns towards Lachesis]**

Hades: Aw, come on, fellas! I have big plans! Mutiny! Hostile takeover! REVENGE! I gotta know – is this kid – this Hercules – gonna be a problem?

Lachesis: We cannot reveal the future!

Hades: Come on! I'm your best customer! [turns towards Atropos, flattering him]. Looking good, buddy! Have I ever told you how much you remind me of the walking dead?

Atropos: [giggles and acts embarrassed].... I suppose just this once wouldn't hurt...[turns serious, speaks poetically]

In 18 years precisely  
The planets will align  
Ever so nicely  
The time to act will be at hand  
Unleash the Titans, your monstrous band  
Then the once-proud Zeus will finally fall,  
And you, Hades, will rule all!

Hades [**Smiles**] Good, good, good!

Clotho: [**ominous voice**] A word of caution to this tale...

Lachesis: Should Hercules fight, you will fail!

Hades: [**Yells**] WHAT?!!!

Hades: [**calms down**] Ok, fine, fine, I'm cool, I'm fine. [paces back and forth frantically – stops in front of Pain and Panic]

Hades: Pain? Panic? I have a little riddle for you: how do you kill a god?

Pain: Kill? A god?

Panic: [again like he's shouting out the correct answer in class]. You can't! They're immortal!

Hades: Bingo! [**Turns and grabs a bottle filled with a purple liquid**] Take this and give it to the kid and make sure he drinks every last drop. Once he does, he will no longer be immortal.

Pain: Oooh! Sounds like fun! What kid?

Hades: Hercules.

Panic: Who's Hercules?

Hades: You weren't paying attention.

Panic: Never, sir.

Hades: Hercules. Infant son of Zeus and Hera. A helpless baby, who shows every sign of growing up to be as ANNOYING and PRETTY as his parents. [getting angrier with each line]. MY 'BROTHER' [air quotes]. The self-declared "KING" [air quotes] of the "GODS". He OWES me BIG TIME. [ranting]. Banish ME to the Underworld? Let me stew in the souls of the dead for a few millennia? Well, jokes on HIM! He's given me time to amass my powers, to gather my undead army, to PLOT my REVENGE! I'LL SHOW YOU, ZEUS! [shakes fist at the heavens – there are loud sounds of rocks falling? Explosions? Fire and brimstone?].... [after a few moments, Hades calms himself]. Alright, alright. I'm cool. I have a plan.

[to Pain and Panic]. Take this. Go to Mount Olympus. Kidnap baby Hercules. Bring him to Earth and feed him this. Feed him every last drop – you hear me? When he's no longer immortal, then we can get rid of him for good.

**[Pain and Panic take the bottle, salute, and laugh evilly as they leave the stage -the others exit after them]**

**[enter Apollo]**

Apollo: That night, Pain and Panic snuck into Mount Olympus and took Hercules. They brought him down to Earth to finish him off for Hades.

**[The curtains open to reveal Pain and Panic and they have Hercules]**

Panic: Hurry up! The Gods will be coming at any moment! I'm sure they're already on their way!

**[Pain puts the bottle to Hercules mouth and begins giving him the poison]**

Pain: Will you stop it? We're all the way down here with these mortals! They won't find us before it's too late!

Panic: Still... we kidnapped the prince of the gods. It's making me jumpy!

**[They laugh manically]**

**[Pain mimes being punched, dropping the bottle and the baby]**

Pain: OUCH! He hit me!

**[the baby starts to cry]**

Panic: You gotta get him to drink it all!

Pain: I'm not touching him again! That little jerk packs a wallop!

**[A voice is heard off stage – they freeze]**

Amphitryon: Did you hear something?

Alcmene: I think someone's there.

**[Pain and Panic at the sound scurry to hide]**

**[Amphitryon and Alcmene enter on to the stage as Pain and Panic watch on from the opposite side and kneel down beside Hercules]**

Alcmene: It's a little baby boy! Out here by himself?!

Amphitryon: [shouts and looks around] Hello? Anybody there?

**[Alcmene looks at the medallion on his neck and notices a name]**

Alcmene: His name is Hercules. And he has the mark of Zeus!

Amphitryon: I wonder why? Alcmene let us go and warm the child up. We can try to figure out where he came from in daylight.

**[Amphitryon and Alcmene carry Hercules off stage]**

**[Pain and Panic move back in the middle of the stage]**

Panic: OOOOH this is NOT good.

Pain: Don't panic!

Panic: Of course I'm gonna panic! It's my thing!

Pain: What if we tell the boss we got rid of the kid for good?

Panic: But we didn't. He's still alive.

Pain: But we tell the boss he ISN'T. What could go wrong?

Panic: I'll tell you what: when Hades finds out, WE'RE dead!

Pain: You mean, IF he finds out!

Panic: [smiles, nods] IF! If is good!

[enter Muses, who join Apollo]

Muse 3: It was tragic.

Muse 4: Zeus led all the gods on a frantic search.

Muse 5: But by the time they found the baby, it was too late!

**[Curtains close and the Muses return to sing the Gospel Truth III]**

**[Muses finish singing and leave the stage]**

### **Scene 3: Hercules (and Meg) Don't Belong**

**[Curtains open with a Greek marketplace in view and Hercules is carrying heavy crates, as his parents arrange their stock]**

Amphitryon: Hercules please keep to yourself and try not to touch ANYthing in the agora, okay? Remember what happened the last time you helped Christopoulos? The poor man is still picking the up the pieces.

**[A man (Christopoulos) walks by with a large pot in his hands giving a dirty look and both Hercules and Amphitryon awkwardly smile and wave at him]**

Amphitryon: I know you mean well, my boy, but you just don't know your own strength.

Hercules: I'm sorry. You can count on me Dad! I promise.

**[Amphitryon grips Hercules shoulder and gives it a squeeze]**

Amphitryon: Thank you for all your hard work. I don't know where we'd be without you.

Alcmene: Customers!

**[Amphitryon and Alcmene leave the stage]**

**[Hercules goes back to unpacking sacs of grain from the crates and suddenly a discus (Frisbee) lands near his feet and a bunch of village kids appear on stage. Megara is following behind them, hanging back. Hercules picks up the discus]**

Village kid 1: Hey, Herc... We don't want any trouble! Could we just have our discus back?

Hercules: Do you need another player? I love discus!

Villager kid 2: No, no! We already have 5 [holds up four fingers] so the teams are even.

Hercules: But 5 isn't an even number!

Villager kid 3: No thanks! We're good!

Villager kid 4: Give it back before your break it!

Villager kid 5: Hey – maybe we should call you JERK-u-les!

**[Hercules winds up to throw the discus]**

Village kids 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5: No wait! Don't—

**[Hercules release the discus and the village kids duck down and within seconds a huge crash is heard and Christopoulos appears with a broken pot in his hands and Amphitryon and Alcmene also enter the stage from the opposite side and move in between Hercules and Christopoulos. Hercules looks horrified]**

Amphitryon: Christopoulos! Wait! The boy doesn't know his own strength.

Christopoulos: [Angry] That boy of yours is a menace! This has happened one too many times Amphitryon!

Amphitryon: He just can't help himself. He means well!

**[Christopoulos points at Hercules]**

Christopoulos: How long before he kills someone? Keep him away from my pots and out of the market! You'll be hearing from my lawyers!

**[Christopoulos storms away – the village kids leave the scene – Meg approaches Hercules shyly]**

Megara: Don't feel bad, Hercules. Those kids never let me play, either. [she pats him on the shoulder, and turns to leave – Hercules looks at her, surprised]

**[Amphitryon and Alcmene turn to Hercules- Hercules hangs his head]**

Amphitryon: [lightly] Hercules, you shouldn't let those things they said back there get to you.

Hercules: But they're right! I try and try to fit in, but... I feel like I really don't belong here. Like I'm supposed be somewhere else!

Alcmene: Oh Hercules.

Hercules: I know it doesn't make any sense!

**[Hercules begins to sing part one of I Can Go the Distance]**

**[Amphitryon and Alcmene approach Hercules]**

Amphitryon: Hercules, there's something your mother and I have been meaning to tell you. It won't make things any better, but might explain why you feel 'different.' You were a great gift to us, and you will always be our son, but... The truth is that we found you abandoned as a baby, and took you in to raise as our own.

Hercules: But if you found me, then where did I come from? Why was I left here?

**[Alcmene takes out a medallion from her robes]**

Alcmene: We don't have any idea. This was around your neck when we found you. It's the symbol of the Gods.

**[Hercules takes the medallion in his hands and becomes excited]**

Hercules: This is it! Don't you see? Maybe they have the answers! I'll go to the temple of Zeus and—

**[Hercules hesitates and turns to Amphitryon and Alcmene, who are smiling, but have tears in their eyes]**

Hercules: [Hesitating] Ma... Pop... you're the greatest parents anyone could have, but... I-I gotta know.

**[Hercules hugs Alcmene and Amphitryon places his hand on Hercules shoulder]**

**[Amphitryon and Alcmene stand back and Hercules moves forward – he exits the stage front and runs down the aisle of the Gym]**

**[Curtains open and a statue of Zeus is visible center stage as Hercules enters the scene from the side]**

**[Hercules moves in front of the statue]**

Hercules: Oh Mighty Zeus! Please hear me and answer my prayer. I need to know: Who am I? Where do I belong?

**[the lights flicker and a thunder can be heard in the distance]**

**[Suddenly the statue of Zeus comes to life, smiles and begins to speak]**

Zeus: [Happily] My Boy! My little Hercules!

**[Hercules in fear begins to move away]**

Hercules: AAAAHHHH!

Zeus: Hey kiddo hold on there! I didn't mean to shock you! It's quicker to appear as a statue than to travel all the way from Mount Olympus to talk to my son.

**[Hercules stops]**

Hercules: Son? I'm your SON? You are my father?!

Zeus: Didn't you know you had a famous father, did you? Surprise!!! Look how you have grown! Why you've got your mother's beautiful eyes...

Hercules: I don't understand... If you're my father, that would make me a—

Zeus: A god! By thunder, it's good to be able to tell you the truth!

**[Hercules backs up and holds his head in shock]**

Hercules: A god... A god! Well THAT sure explains a few things... But why did you leave me on Earth? Didn't you want me?

Zeus: [lightly] of course we did... Your mother and I love you. But someone stole you from us and turned you mortal. Only gods can live on Mount Olympus. And we're not supposed to meddle in the lives of mortals.

Hercules: And you can't fix it?

Zeus: I can't. But you can! Hercules, if you can prove yourself a true hero on Earth, your god-hood will be restored!

Hercules: A true hero... great! But exactly how can I become a true hero?

Zeus: Well, I can't tell you specifics. But in your quest, you must use your gifts to help others in need, and act selflessly. First, it is important that you seek out Philoctetes, trainer of heroes. He will prepare you for the trials ahead. To find him, head north. Climb up into the mountains. When it starts to smell funny, you've reached your destination.

Hercules: What??? Really? Okay! I'll go north! **[starts to walk off-stage]**

Zeus: Whoa! Hold your horses! Speaking of horses, I have something for you... **[whistles loudly – Pegasus arrives from off-stage]**

Hercules: Wow.

Zeus: You don't remember him, but his name is Pegasus, and you two met a long time ago. He's yours. He will serve you well. Good luck, my son. Your destiny awaits!

Hercules: Thank you, father! I won't let you down!

**[Zeus returns to being a statue]**

**[Hercules sings I Can Go the Distance Pt 2 and exits with Pegasus]**

**[Apollo, Muses and Meg enter scene – Meg looks up at the statue of Zeus]**

Apollo: [addressing audience] There is another side to this whole story that got overlooked by history. While Hercules was beginning his quest to regain his birthright, another kid had quietly begun to re-think hers. Her tale is much more ordinary. From humble beginnings in a sleepy Greek town, not Mount Olympus, came Megara.

Muse 5: Who?

Muse 3: We don't have any songs about Megara.

Muse 1: But hey – maybe we should!

Muse 4: She, too, never felt she belonged, not because of her super-human strength, but because of her unladylike ambition.

Muse 2: She wanted to RUN. She knew she was fast – faster than the boys.

Muse 1: She wanted to train to be a world-class athlete. She knew she could do it!

Muse 3: Everywhere Megara went, people told her “NO”.

Muse 2: No running! No playing! No fun! [crosses her arms and pouts]

Muse 4: Despite her abilities, people dismissed her. A girl can't be athletic, a girl can't train, a girl can't compete! A girl must know her place!

Muse 5: That's so unfair!

Muse 4: Uh-huh! When he couldn't stop her from running, her father determined to find her a husband.

Muses 1, 2, 3, and 5: NO!!!!

Muse 4: But Megara tricked him. She agreed to marry the first guy who could beat her in a race.

Muse 2: And then she BEAT them ALL!!!! [high fives the Muses on either side of her] Aw come on! We NEED a song for this kid! Let's DO something!

[Muses huddle – while Apollo talks, they mime a sports ritual 1-2-3 cheer! Then return to formation]

Apollo: [directing attention back to statue of Zeus] When Hercules left town to find his destiny, Megara followed.

Meg: Oh Mighty Zeus! Please hear me and answer my prayer. I need to know - who am I? Where do I belong? [pauses – silence] Nothing? Of course not. [she throws herself to the floor, arms folded on the podium, and covers her face, like she's crying]

Apollo: The thing is – she WAS really fast. Without any training, without any god-gifted superhuman powers... What a shame! [calls off-stage] Yo! Artemis! Do you think you could help Megara?

[Artemis walks onto scene – taps Zeus on leg – he wakes up, steps down, she steps onto podium, places a bow and quiver of arrows at her feet, and poses like a statue]

Apollo: Go on Meg! Try again!

Meg [lifts head, confused]: Artemis??? What?! [shakes her head, stands up, clears her throat] O Mighty Artemis! Please hear me and answer my prayer. I need to know – who am I? Where do I belong? [gasps] This wasn't here before! [picks up bow and quiver of arrows, puts them on] Thank you! Thank you! I dedicate my life to your service.

[Muses reprise Part 2 of “I Can Go the Distance” with Meg – she runs off down the aisle of the gym to exit – as she runs, Artemis, Apollo, and Muses wave after her]

Muse 5: You GO girl!!!!

## **Scene 4: Hercules Finds Phil**

[Curtains open to show Hercules and Pegasus walking]

Hercules: I'm not sure this is the right place. It's freezing, and it stinks! Only a crazy person or an animal would live here.

[Phil walks onstage, carrying a shovel]

Phil: Hey! Who you calling an animal?! And who are you? What's the matter? Never seen a satyr before?

Hercules: Uh, actually, no. Didn't mean to be rude. Maybe you can help me? I'm looking for someone called Philoctetes.

**[Phil approaches Hercules and holds out his hand]**

Phil: Call me Phil. [holds out hand to shake]

Hercules: Boy am I glad to meet you! [pumping vigorously]

Phil: Yeee-ouch!!!! [pulls hand back in pain]. Phew! Nice strong grip there.

Hercules: I need your help to become a hero. A true hero.

Phil: Sorry kid, can't help ya! I got two words for ya: I AM RETIRED. I'm out to pasture. Well, not really – I got this gig clearing the Augean stables. They're the biggest barns in Greece. So, so, SO many cows! [stares off into the distance, traumatized] I can't do anything else until it's done.

Hercules: Gimme a shovel! I'll help you!

[they walk off-stage – deafening moos are heard – they walk back on-stage, a little dirty and dishevelled]

Phil: Holy cow, kid! That was amazing! I would've never thought to divert that river through the stables to pressure-wash the muck out! Worked like a charm! NOW I'm officially retired. Well, see ya around!

Hercules: C'mon! I need a trainer. Haven't you ever had a dream?

[Phil softens.]

Phil: Aw, kid. Come here. I wanna show you something. [pulls out a canvas – they unfurl it together]. This is kinda my professional portfolio.

Hercules: Whoa!

Phil: I trained ALL those would-be heros: Odysseus, Perseus, Theseus – lotta ‘yus-es’. And every single one of those bums let me down! Not one of ‘em could go the distance! And then – there was Achilles. A guy who had it all. The build, the foot speed, the stamina.... But he had this heel, see, this bad, bad heel. In the end, he crumbled under pressure just like every other contender. What makes you any different?

Hercules: I need to become a hero to rejoin my family on Mount Olympus. See, my father is Zeus, and...

Phil: Hold it! You’re saying your father is Zeus? That’s your story? Geez, kid, you must really think I’m dumb.**[begins to laugh]**. Zeus! The big guy. He’s your Daddy! Mr. Lightning Bolts? Read me a book, will ya Da-da? [mimics Zeus] ‘Once upon a time...’

Hercules: It’s the truth!

Phil: So kid – one question: if your Pops is the King of the Gods, why do you need me?

**[Phil begins to sing and dance scene for One Last Hope]**

**[One Last Hope song and dance scene ends]**

Hercules: Did you see that?! Next stop Mount Olympus!

Phil: Not so fast, Junior! We’re headed for Thebes! We’ll take your unicorn! [Pegasus knickers in protest, stomps his hoof at Phil] What are ya then? Horse? Flying horse? [Pegasus nods] Now I’ve seen everything. No hard feelings? [holds his hand out – Pegasus sniffs him and allows himself to be petted]

Hercules: What’s in Thebes?

Phil: A lot of problems. It’s a big tough town, good place to start building a hero rep. Plus, my gym’s there. Best facilities in the business.

Hercules: Alright, Coach. You’re the boss.

**[A scream of frustration is heard – Pegasus rears]**

Hercules: WHOA!

Phil: What in the name of Chaos?!

**[A Centaur appears with a woman – the two are struggling mightily – she’s pulling on a leash, he’s straining against the collar and dragging her]**

Hercules: Pardon me, my good... uh... sir, but I’m going to have to ask you to release that young...

Meg: Move along. I got this.

**[Nessus the centaur snarls]**

Hercules: Uh [clears throat]... aren’t you a damsel in distress?

Meg: I’m a damsel, and I’m in distress – but I can totally handle it! Everything is under control! He was just – [pulls leash – Nessus pulls back] about- [pull/ pull] to give in- [pull/ pull] and come with me – [pull/pull] like a good little horsey!

[Hercules steps closer, the Centaur shoves him and he flies backwards ]

**[Phil face palms]**

Phil: Come on kid! Use your head!!!

**[Nessus still pulling on the least as Hercules gets up and drops his head and begins to charge head first into Nessus]**

Phil: Woooohhh!!! Way to go kid! Not exactly what I had in mind, but...

**[Nessus lets go of Megara, regains his footing, and charges back at Hercules]**

**[Megara scurries out of the way]**

Nessus: How dare you interfere! I’m going to—

**[Hercules and Nessus spar dramatically for a few seconds – Herc outmanoeuvres the Centaur, delivers a devastating uppercut punch and knocks Nessus down and out]**

**[Phil immediately jumps up and down]**

Phil: You DID IT KID!!! **[Phil turns to Meg]**. I can't believe it, can you?

**[Hercules goes over towards Megara and helps her up]**

Hercules: Are you okay, miss...?

Megara: Megara, but my friends call me Meg. At least they would if I had any friends.

Hercules: Uhhh...

Meg: Are you always this articulate?

**[She turns to Phil]**

Phil: His name is Hercules.

Meg: I KNOW. Well thank you for your "help" Hercules. Next time somebody says back off, you'd better listen.

Hercules: **[Awkwardly]** But that Centaur...

Meg: Do you think that maybe there was MORE going on in that situation than meets the eye? Ugh, forget it. I don't have the time or the CRAYONS to explain it to you. Catch ya later, Wonder Boy!

Hercules: Well, that would be nice. **[awkwardly]** I'm headed for Thebes so... **[to Phil]**. I'm so confused.

Phil: I don't know what the rules are for rescuing damsels who don't want rescuing. Can't help ya there. **[puts his arm on Hercules's shoulders and they walk off-stage]** But lemme tell ya – nice head-butt move! Totally caught that beast off-guard. You always wanna keep your opponent on the back-foot.

Meg: **[addressing the audience]** Hercules is a nice guy, but a little dense.

**[Two creatures stare up at Meg from below the stage]**

Meg: Ew!

**[Pain and Panic crawl up on stage]**

Pain: Geez, lady. You never seen an imp before?

Panic: Is that what we are?

Pain: We're sneaky and evil, and we work for Hades...

Panic: I always thought we were just lesser demons? Imps, though. I like it!

**[A voice is heard off stage]**

Hades: Pain! Panic! [singsong voice] Oh Pa-ain! Oh Pan-ic!

Pain: Speak of the devil...

**[Hades appears]**

**[Hades approaches Meg and circles her – she shrinks back, afraid]**

Hades: Why if it isn't ambitious little Megara. Meddling little Megara! *I was GOING to convince the water guardian centaur to join my army of the dead. Now, no thanks to you, he's out of commission.*

**[Meg stops shrinking, stands up straight, puts her bow on her back]**

Meg: Actually, it wasn't me. I was just trying to capture him for Artemis. I didn't knock him out.

Hades: That's fine, I'm not mad. So, if not you, who clocked the Centaur?

Meg: Some guy called Hercules.

**[Hades immediately erupts in rage]**

Hades: What?!!!

**[Pain and Panic converse on the side of the stage]**

Panic: Hercules... Hercules... I feel like I know that name...

Pain: Isn't that the name of that kid we were supposed to—

Panic and Pain: OH NO!!!!!!

**[Hades is already right behind them and grabs them and yells in their face]**

Hades: I thought you useless vermin got rid of him!!! Long ago! That's what I believe I was lead to believe.

**[Pain and Panic drop to the ground and begin crying]**

Pain: He out-witted us.

Panic: Yeah! That baby was smarter than us!

Pain: And he HIT me.

Panic: Yeah! He was a bully AND a baby!

Pain: [grabbing Panic]. We kidnapped him...

Panic: Just like you told us...

Pain: [miming shoving bottle in Panic's mouth] We fed him the bottle of purple stuff...

Panic: mmmf mruph moo mfff mss...["Just like you told us" but with mouth full]

Pain: Then WHAM- BAM! [miming receiving an uppercut, falling backwards]

Panic: He punched Pain, and then HE started to cry. WAAAAAH! [lies on floor, kicks legs like a baby]

Pain: And then some PEOPLE showed up and we had to hide...

Panic: And they took the baby!

**[Hades turns away in disgust]**

Hades: ENOUGH. I've heard enough. I shoulda known better than to leave such an important job to the likes of you two half-baked henchmen. If you want evil done right, you gotta do it yourself. I need Hercules DEAD. Kaput. Gonzo. Pronto. [walks over to Meg – puts his arm around her shoulder -with a fake happy tone] Well then, Meg I guess you are going with Pain and Panic to find Hercules. Lucky you!

Meg: What? I'm not going to help them. I don't work for you!

Hades: Meg, Meg, Meg. They owe me a dead god, and you – you just owe me.

Meg: How???

Hades: You should be thankful that I didn't just smite you on the spot! Do you know who I am? Do you know what I do for a living – pun intended? Measly mortals like yourself do not SURVIVE meeting me, as a rule. I will spare you – you will get rid of Hercules. I don't care how you do it – just DO IT!!! Or it's straight into the River Styx with you. Toodles!

**[Curtains close]**

## **Scene 5: Hercules and the Hydra**

**[Scene opens with a view of the city of Thebes many people move around on the floor, miming going about their business]**

**[Hercules and Phil pass a gate with a sign that says Thebes]**

Hercules: Wow!!! This place is so—

Phil: Disgusting! People living piled on top of each other and everyone trying to make a quick buck. I hate the city. My mountaintop pasture with the goats is waaay better. But, as they say, if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere!

**[Meg runs onto the scene]**

Hercules: Meg? I can't believe it!

Meg: [a little winded] Wonder Boy, am I glad to see you! There are two little boys stuck in a cave just outside of town. We need some muscle.

**[Phil butts in]**

Phil: Wait a goat-herding minute. Last time we helped YOU, you were mad about it. [suspicious]. And how did you get here so fast? You got a flying horse too?

Meg: I'm a really fast runner.

Phil: Yeah right! You're a girl!

Hercules: [interrupts] Phil this is it! I have to save these children! My first step on the road to becoming a hero!

**[Phil rolls his eyes]**

Phil: [sarcastically] Sure, don't ask questions, don't think it through. Just charge straight in! I'm starting to see a pattern here... Oy vey! [face palm] Alright Junior – you wanna do this? Let's do this right! [addresses the crowd] ATTENTION! ATTENTION! Fine ladies and gentlemen of Thebes: Hercules here [gestures to him] is going to rescue two boys trapped in a cave! If you wanna see a true hero in action, follow us to the show! Step right up!

**[They leave the scene and the curtains open]**

**[A large boulder is on the right of the stage – Pain and Panic in bad wigs are crouched behind it – Hydra concealed off-stage – Hercules, Pegasus, Phil, and Meg enter through the Gym side door, followed by a huge crowd]**

Pain [in a kid's voice]: Help! We're trapped!

Panic [in kid's voice]: There was a landslide, and now we can't get out! Help us!

Hercules: [strides onstage] Everything is going to be okay! Just stand back.

**[Hercules stretches out a little bit and positions himself in front of the boulder as everyone watches on – he lifts the boulder with relative ease – the 'boys' scurry out. In the foreground (below stage) the villagers cheer for Hercules]**

Pain: Gee Mister, you're really strong!

Panic: That was awesome! Let's do it again!

Pain: What he means is thank you! You're our hero. [both clasp hands together and make cutesy faces]

**[The brothers leave the stage laughing and playing]**

Phil: [climbs up beside Hercules] Well, you did it kid. You've impressed the socks off of 'em.

**[A booming roar is heard from inside the cave].**

Phil: What in the eye of the Cyclops?!

**[The villagers cheers go dead silent, looking at each other with shock. With the second roar, they panic, the crowd erupting in screams and Hercules and Phil look at each other. Meg moves to the side of the stage with Pegasus – Hercules steps toward the cave and draws his sword]**

**[The Hydra rolls out and Hercules is facing it with his back to the crowd. The crowd sees the Hydra and screams again]**

**[The Hydra roars once more]**

Phil: [Alarmed] Two words: Am-scray!!!

[Phil scuttles over beside Meg and Pegasus]

**[The Hydra's head immediately lunges out at Hercules and Hercules jumps aside and avoids the head. The Head moves back and readies to strike again]**

Phil: Watch out for the teeth!!! Yikes!

**[Meg, Phil, and Pegasus mirror Hercules's moves – jabs, swipes, steps forward, steps backward]**

**[Hercules continues to dodge the attacking head of the Hydra and finally strikes the neck of the Hydra after its next attack]**

**[The Hydras head flops and the neck retreats to its body and the crowd cheers]**

**[the Hydra shudders and two heads grow out of the body]**

Phil: Whoa! Time out! Time out! [steps forward, making a T with his hands] Come here, kid. [Hercules sits in front of him – Phil towels off his face, gives him a drink from a water bottle, and begins to massage his shoulders] Little coaching

moment. This ain't good! Apparently, it's a Hydra!!! The more you cut off heads, the uglier it's gonna get!

Hercules: Well, how do I beat it, Phil?

Meg [calls to Hercules]: Try attacking the body!

Phil: Yeah, what she said. I think that might be the ticket. Body shots only. Avoid the necks. [hands Hercules a shield – pats him on the back and sends him back toward the Hydra]

**[The Hydra starts attacking again and this time it occasionally knocks Hercules over as he tries to block two heads. Hercules is visibly hesitating to use his sword, but eventually he gets tripped up and he slices another head. The neck once again recoils and once again more heads appear. There are now four]**

**[Hercules is becoming exhausted, looking banged up – the Hydra attacks -the crowd gasps, Meg and Phil watch in horror as Hercules falls to one knee]**

Meg: [blurts out] No!!! Get up!

Phil: Come on kid... You're my one last hope!

**[The Hydra prepares all its heads to attack at once]**

**[Hercules gets up and wobbles a little bit, readies his sword and charges into the Hydra as all the heads surround him]**

**[The necks untangle and Hercules is nowhere to be seen]**

**[Meg drops to her knees]**

Meg: [shocked] No!

**[Pegasus nuzzles Meg - Phil can't believe his eyes and is frozen in shock]**

**[Suddenly a weird sound is heard coming from the Hydra and all the heads drop to the ground to reveal Hercules with his sword stabbed into the body of the Hydra - he falls to the ground beside the Hydra]**

**[Phil rushes towards Hercules with Meg and they help him up]**

**[Hercules looks out of it, but then he comes to around and speaks]**

Hercules: [Weakly] Hey guys... Not bad for a rookie, huh?

Phil: [Excited] I've got two words for ya Junior— You DID IT!! Now even I'm impressed!

Hercules: [to Meg] Hey – are those little boys okay? I don't know how they were so close to the Hydra and didn't get hurt.

Meg: Yeah, yeah. [sarcastically] It's a miracle.

**[The villagers move towards Hercules and together they cheer and carry Hercules away – Meg exits with Pain and Panic]**

**[Curtains close and Apollo and Muses appear in front of the curtains]**

**[Hydra should be cleaned up during this time]**

Muse 5: Hercules slayed the Hydra.

Muse 3: The people of Thebes carried Hercules back to the city and celebrated his victory.

Muse 4: Hercules had saved the day!

Muse 1: I love this story so much! Such a heart-throb.

Muse 2: From that day forward, our boy Hercules could do no wrong. He was so hot, steam looked cool!

**[Curtains open and Muses song and dance scene for Zero to Hero – song ends-curtains close]**

## **Scene 6 – The Labours of Team Hercules**

**[ Hercules poses mid-stage, hands on hips, big smile – Meg, Phil, and Pegasus behind and around him -Apollo speaks]**

Apollo: It was one of the most incredible winning streaks in all of history.

Hercules had an unstoppable team: a world-class coach – the brilliant Philoctetes

[Phil poses, hands on hips – gestures for applause]; a flying horse and mighty battle steed, loyal Pegasus [Pegasus poses and tosses his mane – Phil gestures for applause for him]; and a speedy sidekick, a silent and equally heroic partner, unsung Megara [Phil gestures for applause for her]... After news of the defeat of the Hydra, requests for help with monsters or beasts started pouring in from all over Greece. [pause in poses for dramatic effect] In no time, Team Hercules managed to complete 12 labours, though some historians give them credit for even more!

Or, rather, [corrects himself] some historians – [corrects himself] ALL historians - give HERCULES credit for more. His god-like strength and good looks made him the hero of his day. Nobody would call a satyr a hero, sorry Phil. [indignant] Yo! That's straight-up racist! Nobody believed Pegasus was even real. [more indignant] Sorry, boy. The historical record is patchy when it comes to magical beasts! And nobody – I mean NOBODY [angry] – in ancient Greece, or in all the ages since - EVER thought to call Megara a hero. Because she was a girl! Whuuuuut?!

Well, since it's 2020, and we're 'woke', we're setting the record straight. We present to you the twelve labours of Pegasus and Philoctetes and Megara AND Hercules!

[onstage, 'labours of Hercules' are acted out in silence as Apollo lists them off]

Apollo: Cleaning the Augean stables with Phil, that was number one. Dealing with the Hydra was two. Three was neutralizing the Nemean lion, terror of villagers and shepherds, whose fur was impervious to arrows or blades. Hercules wrestled with it, tired it out, and then re-located it like a harmless stray cat to a new habitat, far away from any towns, where it could live out its days. You can't fault a lion for behaving like a lion, after all!

[a lion attacks Hercules – he wrestles with it and pins it to the floor – the lion kicks a minute, then lies still – Hercules puts a rope around its neck, pets it, then they get up and the lion follows Hercules off-stage tamely – as he passes Phil, the lion gives him a swipe with his claw and mimes growling – Phil puts his hands up and backs up]

[Apollo continues]

Labour number four was the Hind of Artemis – a deer with golden antlers and hooves. She escaped and ran around free for years. No one could capture her,

though many tried. With all that gold on her, she could've been stripped and sold for parts like a luxury automobile! Hercules was called in, and with Meg to chase the hind, he had her roped in no time. Artemis herself made an appearance to collect the magical creature. Hercules earned the blessing of another god.

[ a kid in antlers – the 'golden hind' runs across the stage, chased by Meg – Phil hands Hercules a rope– the deer looks at Meg, Hercules lassoes her antlers, and hands the rope to Meg, who leads the deer to Artemis, handing her the rope – Meg bows, and receives a medal from Artemis – she places the medal on Hercules's neck]

[Apollo continues – Hercules, Meg, Phil and Pegasus freeze in hero pose]

Then there was the Cretan bull, the Erymanthian boar, the flesh-eating mares of Diomedes, the Stymphalian birds.... Team Hercules was basically Greece's go-to animal-control company for a while. With all of the beasts they conquered, they suddenly had the attention of the gods. [incredulous] And then... Hercules started to get calls from the gods themselves! Atlas, who chose to side with the Titans ages before, and who was condemned for all of eternity to hold the weight of the world on his shoulders... well, he needed a break.

[Atlas walks onstage, struggling under the weight of the world - Hercules takes the world from Atlas – Hercules is not straining at all – he tosses the globe back and forth like a basketball- Atlas stretches and jogs in place, Meg hands him a drink of water, Atlas asks Phil to scratch his back, then gestures for the world back, bending over – Hercules re-replaces the globe on Atlas's shoulders and his knees buckle under the load – he nods at Hercules – Hercules dusts his hands off and walks away]

[Apollo continues]

After that, Athena asked Team Hercules to engage in some diplomacy with the queen of the Amazons, Something about a tool-belt loaned to Hippolyta, who 'forgot' to give it back, which started a feud... Everyone was too intimidated to just ask her for it, but not our heroes!

[Queen of the Amazons strides onstage, looking intimidating -Meg curtsies, talks to Hippolyta - Hippolyta nods, shakes Meg's hand - takes off her fancy belt full of weapons, and hands it to Hercules – Hercules walks across the stage, hands it to Athena, who mimes thanking him and places another medal around his neck ]

The last few labours got took a weird turn. People – and gods – started asking Hercules to steal things for them. It seems like ‘hero’ can be interpreted as whatever you want it to be. The flesh-eating cattle of the monster Geryon, the magical apples of the Hesperides... we’ll pick up our story again with the request that came in for Herc to steal Cerberus, the three-headed dog that guards the Underworld. That brings us back to Hades.

[curtains close]

## **Scene 7 - Hercules’s Day Off**

**[in front of the stage – Underworld]**

**[Meg walks onstage flanked by Pain and Panic, holding her arms]**

Meg: What is going on, here? Let me go!

Hades: Meg, Meg, Meg, my sweet deluded little minion. You forgot all about me, didn’t you? Running around with a crowd of idiots, doing favours for everyone in heaven and Earth. [menacingly] Time to pay me back for MY favour.

Meg: What favour? I’m nobody’s servant!

Hades: Remember? By the riverbank, when I so generously spared your life? We had a deal. Any of this sounding familiar?

Meg: You’re crazy! I crossed your path accidentally, and you threatened me with death. So I took Hercules to ‘rescue’ these two numb-skulls...

Pain and Panic: Hey! [protesting]

Meg: [continues]...in a cave, and that was my ticket to freedom. And it was a TRICK, by the way. Now who’s being ‘forgetful’? You never told me about the Hydra.

Hades: I wonder what Wonder-Boy would say if he knew you tricked him?

Meg: He wouldn't believe it, because it isn't true. I brought him to a hero gig, is all. We're a team. He knows I've got his back.

Hades: I'm sorry. Do you mind running that by me again? I must have had a chunk of brimstone wedged in my ear or something.

**[Meg confronts Hades]**

Meg: Forget it, Hades. There is no deal.

**[Hades turns away and faces the audience]**

Hades: So, so sad. She's been running around pretending to be a hero so much that she's actually starting to believe her own hype. Meg – you may be smarter than your father, you may be faster than your earthly suitors, you may be more experienced and more qualified than golden boy Hercules – but you're too far ahead of your time, and you will be forgotten, cruelly. The world is not ready for a girl to be a hero. Pain! Panic!

**[Pain and Panic snap to attention]**

Hades: Restrain her! Muzzle her! Lock her up!

Pain and Panic: Lock her up! Lock her up! Lock her up! [they wrap a rope around Meg, and tie a bandanna over her mouth – she struggles but can't overpower them]

Hades: [ranting] I have waited EIGHTEEN YEARS for the EXACT planetary alignment to put my plan into motion. Here I am, about to rearrange the COSMOS tomorrow, literally moving heaven and Earth, and the one schlemiel who can stop me is WALTZING around, oblivious! WHY in the name of all that's unHOLY-WHY CAN'T I JUST GET RID OF THIS KID?! There's only one thing I haven't tried – the direct approach. The hard sell. I don't actually NEED your cooperation, Megara, – just stay there and look pretty.

[The Fates walk on the scene – snipping their scissors and cackling]

Gentlemen! In a few minutes, Hercules is going to appear at the gates of the Underworld, looking to capture Cerberus to return him to his original owner. I will regrettably not be hanging around to watch the sideshow, since my attendance is required at the main event. But mark my words – Hercules will be your next

victim. Or – if Meg here decides to continue the charade – you may get a two-for-one special.

Clotho: The time is at hand.

Lachesis: Unleash the Titans!

Atropos: And Olympus will fall!

Hades: Yadda yadda yadda – EXCEPT if Hercules fights, right, my eerie friends?

Clotho: If Hercules fights...

Lachesis: You will fail...

Atropos: And you'll spend eternity in your Underworld jail. Hey – not bad for off-the-cuff!

Hades: Now everybody's in position? – FREEZE. [the characters keep their poses on the floor. Hades climbs steps onto the stage, and Hercules steps through]

**[Hades approaches Hercules, who is doing push-ups, squats etc. and holds his hand out]**

Hades: Name's Hades, Lord of the Dead. Hi. How ya doin'?

**[Hercules looks at Hades and refuses to shake his hand]**

Hercules: 498, 499, 500. [stops exercising] Hades. Hades. Do I know you? Lemme get my towel.

**[Hercules turns away, but Hades gets back in front of Hercules]**

Hades: Hey, hey, I only need a few seconds and I'm a fast talker, all right? See, I've got the major deal in the works. A real estate venture, if you will. And Herc, you little devil you, are constantly getting in the way of it.

Hercules: You've got the wrong guy. I'm not in your way.

Hades: Just... [struggles to keep his composure] Just-- hear me out, okay? So I would be eternally grateful if you would... take a day off from this hero business of yours. I mean, monsters? Wild animals? Natural disasters? Catering to the whims

of the gods?... You must be exhausted, am I right? Take an entire day off, okay? It's win-win.

[Phil and Pegasus come on-scene]

Phil: Hey! What's all this about a day off? It's me who authorizes that. Who are you anyway? [suspicious]

Hades: Not important.

Hercules: He says he's Hades. [Phil and Pegasus recoil in horror – Pegasus whinnies]

Phil: Aw geez! I knew I smelled sulfur! Here – he's the god of the Underworld. Very very dangerous. Be careful what you say! And DO NOT shake his hand!

Hades: I'd take umbrage, but he's right. I'm here to make a deal. As usual, I have some leverage, such that you don't appear to have a choice in the matter. And before you say "No!" [throws his hands up, mimics a whining voice] look who I have.

**[Hades directs Hercules attention to the Underworld - Meg is tied up]**

Hercules: Meg! [he draws his sword]

Hades: You only have to agree to give up your strength for about 24 hours, okay? Say, the NEXT 24 hours. After that, Meg here is free as a bird and safe from harm. We dance, we kiss, we schmooze, we carry on, we go home happy. What d'ya say? Come on!

[Hercules looks at Phil, who shrugs]

Phil: Well, we've got that thing with the dog, but we can push it back a day for Meg's sake...

Hercules: You have to swear that Meg won't get hurt.

Hades: Fine, okay, I'll give you that one. I'll cede that point. Meg is unscathed, or you get your strength right back. Sign right here, never mind the fine print, boilerplate, bada-bing-bada-boom. Okay?

Hercules: [nods] Okay. For Meg.

Hades: Then let's make things official and shake on it!

**[Hercules shakes Hades's hand and immediately becomes weak and falls to one knee and Hades laughs an evil laugh]**

Hades: You may feel a little light headed for awhile. Don't worry it's all part of the process. Pain and Panic?

Pain and Panic: Yes Sir!

**[Hades makes a circular gesture. Pain and Panic untie Meg]**

**[Meg rushes up to help Hercules]**

Hades: One more thing. Meg, babe. A deal's a deal, you helped me sideline superman here, so enjoy! You're off the hook. By the way, Herc. Is she not, like, a fabulous little actress?

Meg: Ugh.

Hercules: You're lying!

Hades: Well while you two "team mates" have a falling out, I gotta blaze. So much for the preliminaries, and now onwards to the main event!

**[Curtains close]**

**[Muses and Apollo enter the stage in front of the curtains]**

Muse 1: Things were looking bad for Hercules.

Muse 5: He was weak as a baby.

Muse 3: Harmless as a kitten.

Muse 2: Right when the gods of Mount Olympus, his family, absolutely needed a hero!

Muse 3: A perfect opportunity to prove himself!

Muse 1: Except, blackmailed by Hades, he'd given up his superpower.

Muse 4: The historical record shows what happened next...

Muse 2: [interrupting] Spoiler alert: Hades staged a violent coup!

Muse 3: [interrupting] Using weapons of mass destruction!

Muse 5: [dramatically] The Titans!

Muse 4: [scolding] Girls, please! But as you'd expect, the historical record skims over the part where Herc's trusty team worked together to prop up our kind-hearted demi-god.

Muse 2: Oh, you mean the part where the girl and the satyr and the flying pony save the hero-man?

Muse 1: And then the hero saves all the gods on Mount Olympus!

Muse 3: So if it wasn't for the girl and the satyr and the flying pony, Hades would rule over all?

Muse 5: That's the real deal, sisters!

Muse 4: We wrote a song.

[Muses sing their version of "Zero to Hero" – exit everyone but Apollo]

## Scene 8 – The Final Battle

Apollo: This was a pivotal time for the gods of ancient Greece.

[climbs onto the stage – the curtains open to all of the gods attaching armour, sheathing swords, loading arrows onto bows, and looking grim]

I had a bit of advance warning from my Underworld contacts, but there was barely enough time to summon everyone before the Titans scaled Mount Olympus. We all arrived to gird ourselves for battle right as the prehistoric monsters were invading! The Titans, who were normally terrifying, were ANGRY at the ages they'd passed in confinement thanks to Zeus. They were literally howling like forces of nature.

Zeus: Poseidon, you'll take the western side. Ares, bring the troops to defend the east. Apollo, take your sisters with you and stop Hades before he breaches the gate. Hera will try to talk with the Titans. She's the only one who can! I will support all of you from the air, with Hermes to relay messages among us. [all run off-stage but Zeus]

[lights flickering, sounds of rocks falling, earth quaking, explosions, and loud roars]

\*\*\*\*\* battle for Mount Olympus ensues \*\*\*\*\*

**[the curtains open to reveal Zeus in the middle of Olympus with his lightning bolts in hand – insert Mr. I's special effects here – to trap Zeus in rock? Flaming ropes? – Zeus cannot break loose, though he struggles]**

**[Hades appears on stage]**

Hades: Well, well, well.

Zeus: Hades! When I get my hands on you...

Hades: Let me guess. Lightning bolts for me? [mimes throwing things, making shooting noises] Pew! Pew! Pew-pew! Pew! Alas, poor Zeus, the Titans have your hands full. See what I did there? [laughs maniacally] My, how the worm has turned!

**[loud horse sounds from off-stage - Hercules, Phil and Meg appear with Pegasus]**

Zeus: Hercules!

Hades: Oy, this kid never stops!

Hercules: Right! I'm here to stop YOU, Hades.

Hades: But your superhuman strength! It's gone! What are you going to do? Talk me out of it?! [Hades laughs – then gets angry] Alright! ALRIGHT! [yells] It appears there's no convincing you that you're in mortal peril.

**[Hades and Hercules circle around and the others watch from the side]**

**[Hercules raises his shield and draws his sword and Hades creates one large flaming ball in each hand]**

Hades: Baboom!

**[Hades throws one of the flaming balls at Hercules and he deflects it with his shield. Hercules immediately lunges forward and swings his sword but Hades avoids it and laughs]**

Hades: [Laughing] Please. You cannot harm me! I'm immortal, remember? Something you, sadly, are not!

**[From the background Zeus, Phil and Meg cheer Hercules on]**

Zeus: Keep him fighting, my boy!

Phil: Keep dodging!

Hercules: I just have to keep you busy long enough and my powers will return.

Hades: That would be a great plan, if I didn't have somewhere ELSE to be! It would take a marathon effort for you to fight me another minute. Face it, Hercules; you can't do it. Without your strength, you're NOTHING. If you had any brains, you would take your girlfriend and your petting zoo and get out of here. Maybe I'll be merciful and put you out of your misery right now.

**[as he is speaking, the Fates appear on the scene with Pain and Panic]**

**[Hercules slashes one last time and Hades avoids it and knocks Hercules backwards and he falls to the ground. His shield and sword go flying and he is open to Hades' attack]**

Meg: Get up Herc! Hurry! [she steps toward him]

Hades: And this is where it all ends for Mighty Hercules. Check and mate!  
[throws a fireball]

Meg: NOOO!!!

**[Hades winds up and releases his flame as Meg moves between Hades and Hercules and takes the full blast of Hades' attack. She immediately falls to the ground motionless]**

**[Hercules cries out and rolls her over as everyone watches. The three Fates appear, they have an out stretched thread and scissors at the ready]**

**[The Fates cut the thread and Meg becomes lifeless - the Fates leave the stage – Pain and Panic drag her body off-stage]**

Hercules: No!!!!

**[Hercules gets up and faces Hades]**

Phil: You're going to pay for this! [shakes his fist – Pegasus stomps and tosses his mane]

Hades: [laughs] What, exactly, are you going to do?

**[Hercules flexes his muscles a bit]**

Hercules: You're forgetting something. [angrily] Meg wasn't supposed to get hurt!

**[Hades realizes his mistake and begins to back away]**

Hades: [suddenly nervous] Right, Meg got hurt... You're back to full power, are ya? Hey listen we can work things out, right?

**[Hercules turns and moves towards his father and with ease frees him from the rock that encased him]**

Zeus: Phew! Much better! Thanks son! I'm off to deal with the Titans. Hades, I'll be looking for you later. Hercules, please escort Hades back where he belongs.

Hercules: With pleasure. [menacingly]

**[Zeus runs off stage, lightning bolts in hand]**

**[Hercules approaches and grabs Hades and stares him right in the face]**

Hercules: You will take me to Meg, NOW.

Hades: Okay, okay, big guy. No need to man-handle me. I don't want to hang around here anyway. The thing is, you and your Olympian family have already won. I'm just asking for a little bit of pity. A little less pummelling if you will. I mean, I'm the one who lives for revenge – it's a neurosis. A true hero like you, well, you're supposed to forgive and forget, am I right? Follow me.

Hercules: Phil? Pegasus? **[they step forward – Hercules puts his arms around both of them]**

Phil: [launches into Coach mode – the three huddle] Okay, Junior, this is how you play it. We can't follow you past the gates, but I think since you're with Uncle Undead here, you get a free pass. The myths say that it is possible to get someone back after they've crossed the river Styx, but there's always a toll. BEWARE. Do NOT make any more deals with Hades. He's a crook and a double-crosser. Get Meg, then get out toute suite. We'll be waiting for you.

Hercules: Thanks, Phil. You're the best. I wouldn't have made it this far without you...

Phil: Cut the farewell speech. I've got two words for you: you're coming RIGHT back, ya hear? Go get Meg. [claps hands] Alright, let's hustle!

**[they leave the scene at a jog – Hades and Hercules re-emerge in the Underworld – Pain and Panic are there, as are the Fates]**

Hades: You know, I really thought my plan was going to work. I held all the cards. The planets were aligned! A quick path back to the throne that was stolen from me – my birthright cruelly...

Hercules: [interrupts] Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm done talking. Where's Meg?

Pain: Ouf. Get a load of this guy! [pointing at Hercules with his thumb over his shoulder.

Panic: Not listening to the villain's rants?

Pain: How rude!

Panic: I can smell the hubris!

Hades: Pain! Panic!

Pain and Panic: [they snap to attention] Reporting for duty!

**[Hades points below stage – Hercules immediately starts scanning the water]**

Hades: Your precious Meg is in there. That's the River Styx. Pain and Panic will give you the run-down. If you'll pardon me, I'm going to go lick my wounds.

Pain: So, Hero-boy!

Panic: This is your hour of reckoning.

Pain: Yep – here come the Fates now! [they creep in at the side of the stage, thread stretched, scissors snipping]

Pain: See – you might be able to dive into the river...

Panic: And you might be able to swim a ways...

Pain: But that isn't water...

Panic: It's human-soul soup!

Pain: Cold.

Panic: Dead.

Pain: And chunky.

Panic: Actually, maybe it's more of a human-soul stew, come to think of it.

Pain: And every soul in this stew is going to try to hitch a ride out with you.

Panic: You might be strong, but how many people do you think you can carry while you're swimming?

Pain: A hundred? A thousand? A million?

Panic: A few heroic souls before you have tried to rescue a loved one from the River Styx...

Pain: [demonically] And none have returned.

Panic: [to Pain] Hey – nice touch! So, Hercules. Our question for you is, are you willing to pay the toll?

Pain: Are you willing to trade your life for Megara's life?

Panic: It's a natural balance thing. If a soul comes out, another has to take its place.

Pain: Are you a true hero?

**[Hercules spots her]**

Hercules: [shouts] Meg!

**[He head-first dives into the river]**

Pain: Not much one for chit-chat, the Mighty Hercules.

Hades: What did I miss?

Panic: Geez! He just jumped right in!

Hades: I was just sneaking around behind to push him in! You didn't tell him he'll be dead before he can even get to her? [Yells out at the river] That's not a problem, is it?!

**[The three Fates appear again, holding a stretched-out thread and a pair of scissors at the ready]**

**[Pain, Panic, and Hades watch the Fates with anticipation -The Fates laugh as they go to cut the thread. But it doesn't cut. They try again and again but it does not work]**

Atropos: Oh? The thread won't cut.

Lachesis: What's the matter with these scissors?

Clotho: Just as we predicted.

**[Hades looks at the Fates with frustration]**

Hades: [Yells] What do you mean it won't cut???

Clotho: He's become—

**[Suddenly Hercules begins to emerge with Meg from the River Styx]**

**[Pain and Panic scurry back]**

Hades: NOOO!!! This CAN'T BE!!!! The only way he could have survived that is if he was A GOD!!!

**[Hercules, helping Meg, moves past Hades and the Fates at the front of the stage]**

**[Hades gets in Hercules way]**

Hades: Hercules, stop! Herc! Fine. You don't wanna talk. Okay. Listen. [Hercules turns away] Hah! Okay, well, I deserved that. Can we talk? Your dad, he's a fun guy, right? Meg? How ya feeling? Better, I'd say? So maybe you could put in a word with Zeus and he'd kinda blow this whole thing off, you know? [tries to grab Meg's arm] **[Hercules grabs Hades and throws him into the River Styx]**

**[Hercules leaves the stage and Pain and Panic move to center stage as Hades continues to struggle with the souls. The Fates are also still watching]**

Panic: [Scared] He's not gonna be happy when he gets outta there!

Pain: [Optimistic] You mean, if he gets outta there!

Panic [Joyfully] If. If is good **[smiles and nods his head]**

## **Scene 9 – Hercules on Mount Olympus**

**[Curtains close and the Muses enter the stage in front of the curtain]**

Muse 2: Hercules jumped into the River Styx a mortal, but walked out immortal.

Muse 5: He did it!

Muse 1: His final selfless act to save his friend made him a true hero.

Muse 3: Friend? Can't we call Megara his girlfriend at this point?

Muse 4: Yeah, maybe Hercules and Megara had fallen in love. But Hercules would have jumped into the River Styx...

Muse 2: The river of souls! [dramatically]

Muse 4: ... or indeed ANY river, to save ANYone. That's what a hero does.

Muse 1: He proved himself on Earth, on Mount Olympus, and in the Underworld.

Muse 3: Hercules used his super-human strength to help others.

Muse 2: He was noble! He was courageous! He fought for what was right!

Muse 5: He was mighty like the Canadian moose!

Muse 3: His deeds are remembered through the ages!

Muse 4: He didn't even think twice about sacrificing himself to help another. And THAT, kids, is a true hero.

**[Scene opens with the view of Mount Olympus with all the Gods gathered around and in the Center of the scene are Hercules, Meg, Phil, Zeus and Hera]**

Zeus: You did it my boy!

**[Hera hugs Hercules – Zeus bear-hugs him, lifting him off the ground]**

Hera: We are so proud of you!

**[The other gods walk past Hercules in a line – some shake his hand, some hug him, some high-five him- Atlas hands him the world, hugs him, then takes the world back again]**

Zeus: We all offer our thanks to you, Hercules, saviour of Mount Olympus! And we'd also like to thank our honoured guests: Amphytrion, Alcmene, Philoctetes, Megara, and Pegasus!

**[The gods in the crowd cheer. Pegasus, Meg and Phil bow and wave]**

Zeus: [raises a glass] I propose a toast to my son, Hercules, saviour of Mount Olympus and Hero of the Gods!

**[The gods all hold up golden chalices and toast their hero]**

Apollo: All hail the hero of the gods! [everyone says 'Hercules!' in response]

Poseidon: Who's Hercules?! I thought his name was Herakles?

**[Everyone laughs]**

**[everyone on stage starts talking all at once, turning to one another in conversation, while Meg moves to the lip of the stage and stands facing the audience with a sad look on her face]**

**[Hercules sees her and goes and sits beside her]**

Meg: [holding back her sadness] Congratulations Wonderboy! You'll make one heck of a God.

**[Meg begins to walk away]**

**[Hercules catches her hand and stops her, gently]**

Hercules: Wait a minute, please, Meg. [loud voice – addressing the room] Excuse me! Can I have everyone's attention, please?

**[Everyone pauses and stares at Hercules]**

Zeus: Well? Go ahead son.

Hercules: This is the moment I've always dreamed of. Returning home to Mount Olympus and living with my family! But... A life without Megara... even an immortal life, would be... empty. I [Pause] I wish to stay on Earth with Meg and my team. I finally know where I belong.

**[Zeus nods at him and smiles]**

**[Everyone cheers]**

**[Hermes takes center stage]**

Apollo: Hit it ladies!

**[Muses and others start Song and Dance scene for *A Star is Born*]**

**[Song and Dance scene for *A Star is Born* ends]**

**[Curtains close]**

**[End of scene]**