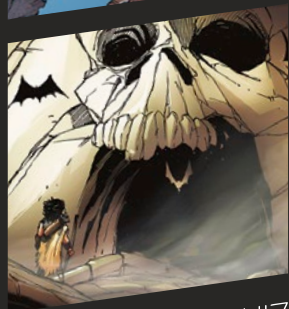




THE ADVENTURES OF HERCULES

A GRAPHIC NOVEL



BY POWELL & RUIZ

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ABOUT HERCULES

In Greek and Roman times, Hercules was one of the most celebrated mythical figures. Half human and half god, Hercules was the son of Zeus, the king of the gods, and Alcmena, a mortal woman. The goddess Hera, Zeus's wife, was angry that Zeus had fathered children with another woman. Since Hera could not harm Zeus, she punished his son Hercules instead.

When Zeus learned that Alcmena was pregnant with Hercules, he announced that the next child born would be the new king. To ruin Zeus's plan, Hera caused a boy named Eurystheus to be born early, making him king instead of Hercules. This angered Zeus, but he stuck to his word and made Eurystheus king. Hera had robbed Hercules of his throne — and her revenge had only just begun.

Next, Hera made Hercules go temporarily insane. In this state, he did some horrible things. When he came to his senses, he visited the Oracle to find out how to redeem himself. Unfortunately, the Oracle was also being manipulated by Hera. The Oracle told him to serve King Eurystheus by performing twelve difficult labors.

Years later, Hera once again sent a madness down upon Hercules. In his altered state of mind, he threw his best friend Iphitus over a wall, killing him. When Hercules realized what had happened, he pledged himself to Queen Omphale of Lydia. Again he hoped to atone for his tragic mistake, not knowing he was innocent.

After serving Omphale for a year, Hercules was free to do as he pleased. He went to the town of Thebes and married a woman named Deianira. The two of them raised a family together. One day, a centaur named Nessus kidnapped Deianira. Hercules managed to shoot Nessus with an arrow tipped with poison from the blood of the Hydra. Near death, Nessus told Deianira to rub his blood on Hercules, which would make Hercules love her forever. But Nessus had lied to her — his blood was poisoned from the arrow Hercules had shot him with, and the poisoned blood burned Hercules's flesh.

As he died, Hercules was allowed into Olympus, the home of the gods, as a reward for his good deeds — and as consolation for being the victim of Hera's trickery.

CAST OF CHARACTERS



A comic book illustration featuring three characters. In the background is a large, muscular centaur with a brown face, a black mane, and a small earring. In the foreground are two human figures: a woman on the left and a man on the right. The woman has dark curly hair with a red headband and wears a white dress with a gold belt. The man has a beard and wears a white tunic with a red cape. The background is a dark, starry space.

Pholus
The Centaur

King Eurystheus

Queen Hippolyte

A comic book cover illustration. In the foreground, Hercules is depicted from the chest up, wearing a lion's head pelt as a cape and a golden headband. He has a determined expression and is holding a large, spiked wooden club. In the background, Artemis is shown in profile, looking towards Hercules. She has green hair and pointed ears. The background is a dark, starry space with a large, green, leaf-like structure. A large, red, diagonal watermark reading 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the center of the image.

Artemis
The Nature Goddess

Hercules

CHAPTER 1 SON OF ZEUS

The Greek island of Ithaca, 6th Century, B.C.E.

A time of gods and heroes . . .

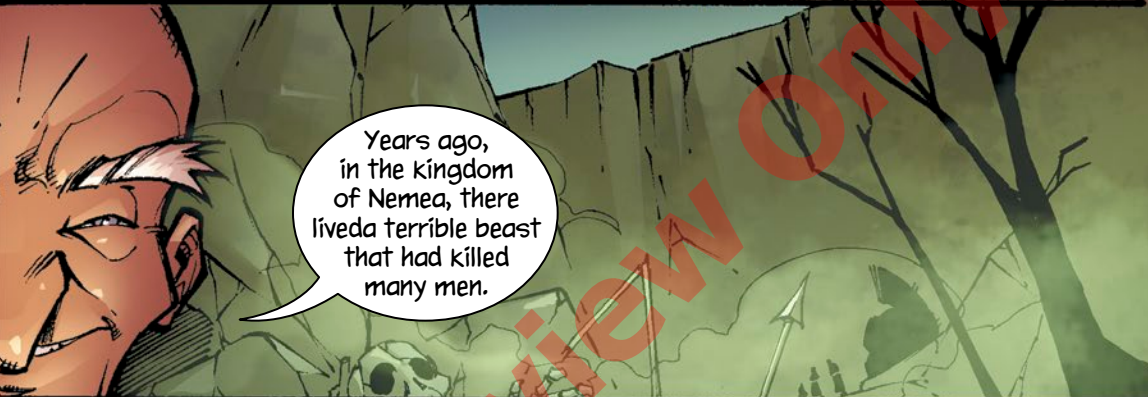
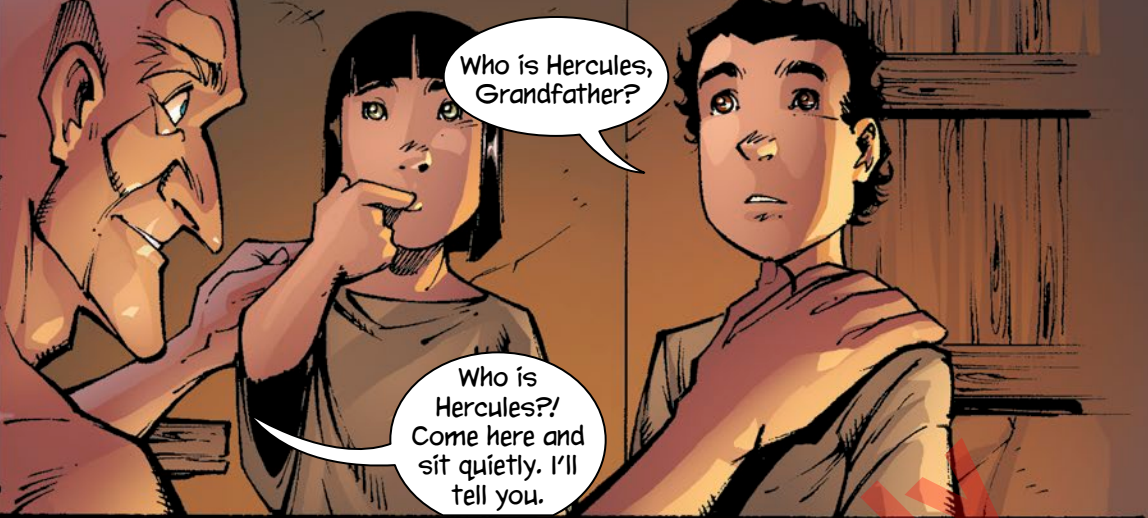
Listen! You can hear it moving around and breathing!

It's out there in the storm. I just know it!

Come, children. We're safe as long as the sea monster doesn't know we're here.

Besides, we have nothing to fear.

Hercules is on his way!



"... until it met Hercules!"



THWAP!!

"Hercules is the strongest man in the world."

"His great power comes from his father, Zeus, the king of the gods."

"Hercules's mother, however, was a mortal woman."

"Perhaps it is **because** Hercules is half man **that** the hero cares so much for **us** humans."

"He has sworn to protect us all from evil."

"Hercules fears nothing."



"Not even the **invulnerable** Nemean Lion, the killer of a thousand men!"



"Hercules quickly defeated the beast with his bare hands!"



It is accomplished.
The first Labor.



"After his quest, Hercules returned to King Eurystheus."

I'm surprised you're still alive, Hercules.

You have killed that which could not be killed!

It seems you deserve your reputation.

I await your instructions, King Eurystheus.

"The cruel King's power over the mighty Hercules puzzled everyone – especially his Queen."

You already know your next Labor.

Now get out! You're frightening my queen!

"It was a secret he and Hercules alone did share."