

HERCULES

THE PRINCE OF POWER

HERE LIES
YOUR ISLE OF
FEAR, FRIEND
JASON.

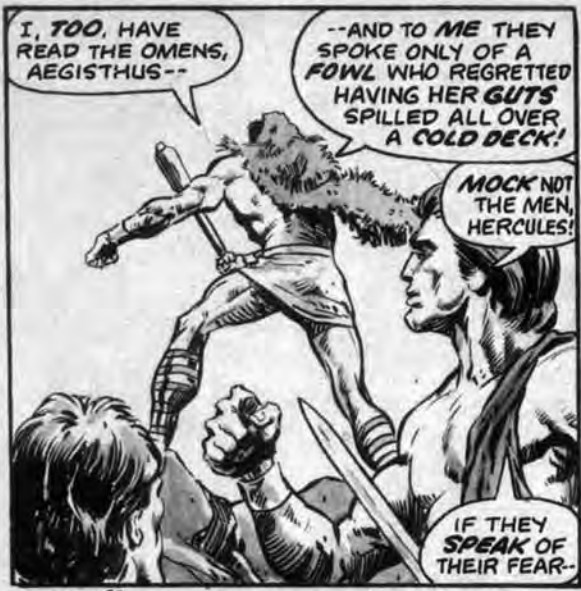
THE FIRST
LEAGUE OF
OUR ACCURSED
JOURNEY.

AYE,
HERCULES...
THE GODS HAVE
SPED THE ARGO
ON ITS WAY--

--BUT I DO DREAD
THAT WHICH WE MUST
FIND HERE-- AND
THAT WHICH WE
MUST DO!

I LIKE IT
NOT, JASON!
I HAVE READ
THE OMENS--
AND THEY FORETELL
DISASTER!

THE ISLE OF FEAR!

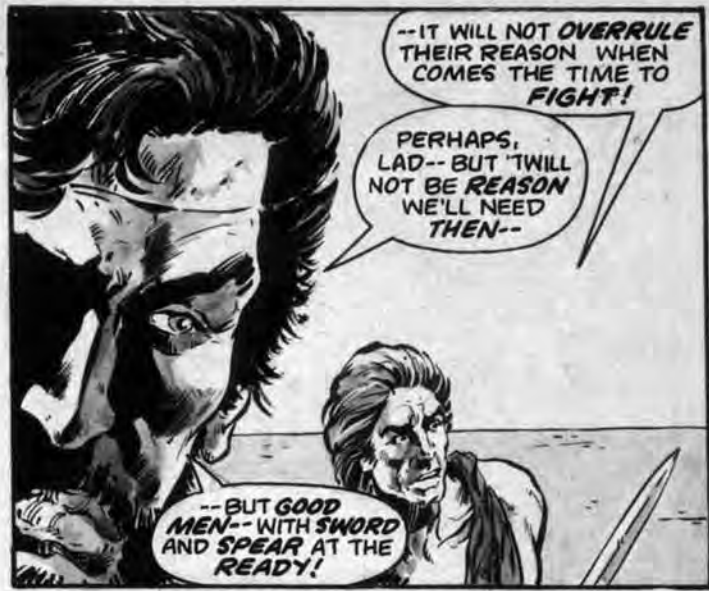


I, TOO, HAVE READ THE OMENS, AEGISTHUS--

--AND TO ME THEY SPOKE ONLY OF A FOWL WHO REGRETTED HAVING HER GUTS SPILLED ALL OVER A COLD DECK!

MOCK NOT THE MEN, HERCULES!

IF THEY SPEAK OF THEIR FEAR--



--IT WILL NOT OVERRULE THEIR REASON WHEN COMES THE TIME TO FIGHT!

PERHAPS, LAD-- BUT 'TILL NOT BE REASON WE'LL NEED THEN--

--BUT GOOD MEN-- WITH SWORD AND SPEAR AT THE READY!

"OR HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN PYLOS, LAD, THE STINK OF BLOOD ON THE HOT SAND OF THE ARENA--

-- THE BREATH FAIRLY REELING YOU BACK AS THE THRICE ACCURSED CROWD BELLOWED FOR MORE--

"-- AND THAT MISBEGOTTEN FLEA BAG OF A DESPOT KING--"

KREON!

I GROW WEARY, OF THE WAITING! WHERE IS THIS SPORT YOU PROMISED, O KING?

IT WILL COME, HERCULES --SOON!

I HAVE BUT TO SIGNAL MY MASTER OF THE GAMES!

THEN SIGNAL AND BE DONE!

HAVE A CARE, OLYMPIAN! YOU SPEAK TO THE KING OF PYLOS!

EH, CAPTAIN! IT WOULD PLEASE US GREATLY IF YOU WOULD CHECK ON THE-- EH-- PROGRESS OF THE PREPARATIONS!

AND SEE TO IT THAT THE GUARD WHO DARED INSULT OUR GUEST IS DRAWN AND QUARTERED!

WE CANNOT AFFORD TO HAVE THE SON OF ZEUS ANGERED AT US!

IT SHALL BE AS YOU SAY, SIRE!

GODS, BUT I DO GROW BLISTERS, KREON!

BUT, WAIT THE FAR-GATE DOTH OPEN!

THE TRUMPETS SOUND--

--THE GAMES DO BEGIN!!

THERE IS A ROAR FROM THE WINE-SOAKED CROWD. IN THE GATEWAY STANDS JASON --THE CAPTAIN OF ARGO...



... BUT THEN A HUSH SWALLOWS THE ANTICIPATION OF THE GAMES TO COME...

... AND THE PEOPLE OF THE PORT-CITY OF PYLOS STARE.

FOR, BESIDE JASON STANDS A LITHE AND YOUTHFUL FORM, HER GOLDEN HAIR LIFTING SLIGHTLY IN THE BREEZE.



ALCESTE, THE DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF PYLOS.

NO! BY ALL THE GODS THERE BE --

--NO!!

THE GODS WILL VOUCHSAFE NOTHING, KING!



LOOK FOR THE WOMAN'S SAFETY NOW--

--ON THE HORNS OF THE BULL!

ITS EYES ARE RED, IT HAS BEEN PRODDED AND STARVED FOR A RITUAL THREE DAYS, AND GIVEN ONLY VINEGAR TO SLAKE ITS THIRST

BEING A BRUTE, IT CANNOT DISTINGUISH WHICH OF THE HUMAN-CREATURES HAS CAUSED ITS PAIN...



... SO IT IS LEFT NO CHOICE BUT TO VENT ITS RAGE...

REMEMBER WHAT I TAUGHT YOU, ALCESTE! DEATH RIDES THE HORNS!

I-- I WILL TRY TO REMEMBER, JASON!

... ON THOSE WHO STAND BEFORE IT!

WATCH ONLY THE HORNS--AND WE WILL WIN CLEAR!

FOR YOU I WILL TRY!



THE BULL SNORTS, PAWS SAND. IT IS CONFUSED BY THE GLARE AND THE ROAR OF VOICES ON ALL SIDES!

... BUT SO IRRITATED IS IT, THAT THE SLIGHTEST MOVEMENT WILL TURN ITS CONFUSION...

THE WOMAN! THE KING WILL HAVE OUR HEADS IF HIS DAUGHTER DIES!

... INTO ACTION!

NO! I MUST WATCH THE HORNS! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--

-- IT CHARGES US!

YOU LITTLE FOOL!



ALCESTE!

THE HORNS!!

PERHAPS THE GUARD THINKS HIMSELF ATTACKED BY JASON'S CRY. PERHAPS HE, TOO, IS CONFUSED BY THE VOICES.

WHATEVER, HE RELEASES THE KING'S DAUGHTER IN ORDER TO DRAW HIS SWORD.

HE REALIZES HIS ERROR TOO LATE!

J-JASON...?

DOWN WOMAN--

DOWN!!

YEEA GGH!

ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

MY ANKLE JASON!

IT'S TWISTED! I CANNOT RUN!

BUT... YOU MUST! BY ALL THE GODS--

--YOU MUST!

AND BLOOD, THE BRUTE HAS DECIDED-- IS BETTER THAN VINEGAR.

WATCH THE HORNS
JASON HAD SAID.

THEY HAVE
NO CHOICE...

...FOR THERE'S
NOTHING BUT
SAND BETWEEN.

ALCESTE,
I--

YOU WOULD DO WELL
TO LEARN NOT TO INDULGE
THE DAUGHTERS
OF KINGS, LAD!

YOU'VE PLACED
US ALL ON THE
HORNS!

HERCULES!

AYE,
JASON--

--HERCULES!
SON OF ZEUS
ALMIGHTY!

BORN OF HIS
LOVE FOR MY
MORTAL MOTHER
--ALCmena!

I WHO WAS
RAISED AMONG
LIONS--HIDDEN
FROM HERA'S
RAGE!

I WHOSE LABOUR'S
CAUSED A WORLD TO
STAND IN WONDER-
MENT--

--WHOSE
STRENGTH CAUSED
FEAR EVEN AMONGST
THE GODS!

AYE, LAD!
HERCULES!!

KRRAR

THE PRINCE OF POWER!!



AND ALL IN THE NAME OF GLORY, LAD!

ALL FOR GLORY!!



BUT THERE ARE SOME WHO DON'T SEE IT QUITE THAT WAY.



DEATH!

BRING ME JASON'S SKIN --OR BY THE GODS, I'LL FLAY YOU ALL!



YOU ENDANGER THE KING'S DAUGHTER --AND YET YOU ASK?

YOU ARE A FOOL, JASON!

HE IS A DEAD FOOL, CAPTAIN!

FATHER, NO!

WHAT HAVE I DONE?





SILENCE, DAUGHTER! IS IT NOT ENOUGH THAT I HAVE BEEN SHAMED BEFORE MY PEOPLE?

BLAME NOT ALCESTE SIRE. I--

HOLD YOUR TONGUE, DOOMED ONE!



BUT, FATHER-- I ASKED JASON TO TEACH ME THE ART OF THE BULL-LEAPERS!

THEN IT IS YOU WHO HAVE DOOMED HIM, MY DAUGHTER!



BUT-- BUT DOESN'T IT MATTER--

--THAT I LOVE HIM?



FORTUNATELY, NO! IT IS I WHO WILL DECIDE WHOM YOU MAY OR MAY NOT LOVE! I--

PEACE, KING OF PYLOS! I CRAVE A BOON--

--AS IS MY RIGHT FOR SLAYING THE CEREMONIAL BULL!



YES, THAT IS SO!

THEN LET IT BE THIS BOY'S LIFE! TAKING IT WILL GAIN YOU NOTHING--

--AND I WILL SEE TO IT THAT HE LEAVES PYLOS, NOT TO RETURN UNTIL HE HAS DONE PROPER PENANCE FOR AFFRONTING YOU.



BETTER YET, HERCULES -- NEVER TO RETURN UNLESS HE CAN BRING ME THE GOLD OF THE GORGON--

--FROM THE SHORES OF THE ISLE OF FEAR!

OH, JASON...

WELL, LAD? DOES NOT THAT SAND GRATE ON YOUR KNEES!

WE HAVE A TASK TO TEND TO!



BUT THE ISLE OF FEAR, HERCULES--

IS AN ISLAND LIKE ANY OTHER, LAD--

-- AND ONCE WE'VE A SHIP AND CREW--

"-- THE GORGON'S GOLD WILL BE OURS FOR THE TAKING!!"

GODS, BUT I'D SWEAR A WIND HAS WHIPPED UP JUST TO PLAGUE US!

OMENS, HERCULES? I THOUGHT BETTER OF YOU!



SO! EVEN A GODLING CAN FEAR AN EVIL WIND--

-- AND WISH HE STOOD A QUIETER BERTH BACK ON THE STREETS OF PYLOS!

HAVE A CARE, AEGISTHUS! BECAUSE I LIKE NOT THE CHILL IN THE AIR--

-- IS NO CAUSE TO CAST CLAIMS OF WITCHERY AGAINST ME!

HERCULES? IN ALL GAIA OR OLYMPUS--

-- IS THERE ANY TALE TOLD OF LIONS THAT FLY?

ONLY WHEN HEPHAESTUS HAS TAKEN TOO MUCH NECTAR, LAD! WHY?



I JUST WISHED TO KNOW BEFORE I ABANDONED REASON, AND CRIED--





"GRIFFIN!"

RRRRR..

..ROWRRR!



BY THE SILVER BOW OF APOLLO..

-- YOU HAVE SPEARS DON'T YOU?

CAST THEM!!



THEY OBEY, THESE MEN OF THE ARGO...



... BUT OF WHAT USE ARE SPEARS...

TCHAK

SKRAK

... AGAINST A HIDE AS STRONG AS STEEL?



IT FALLS UPON THE MEN!

HE DEVOURS THEM!!

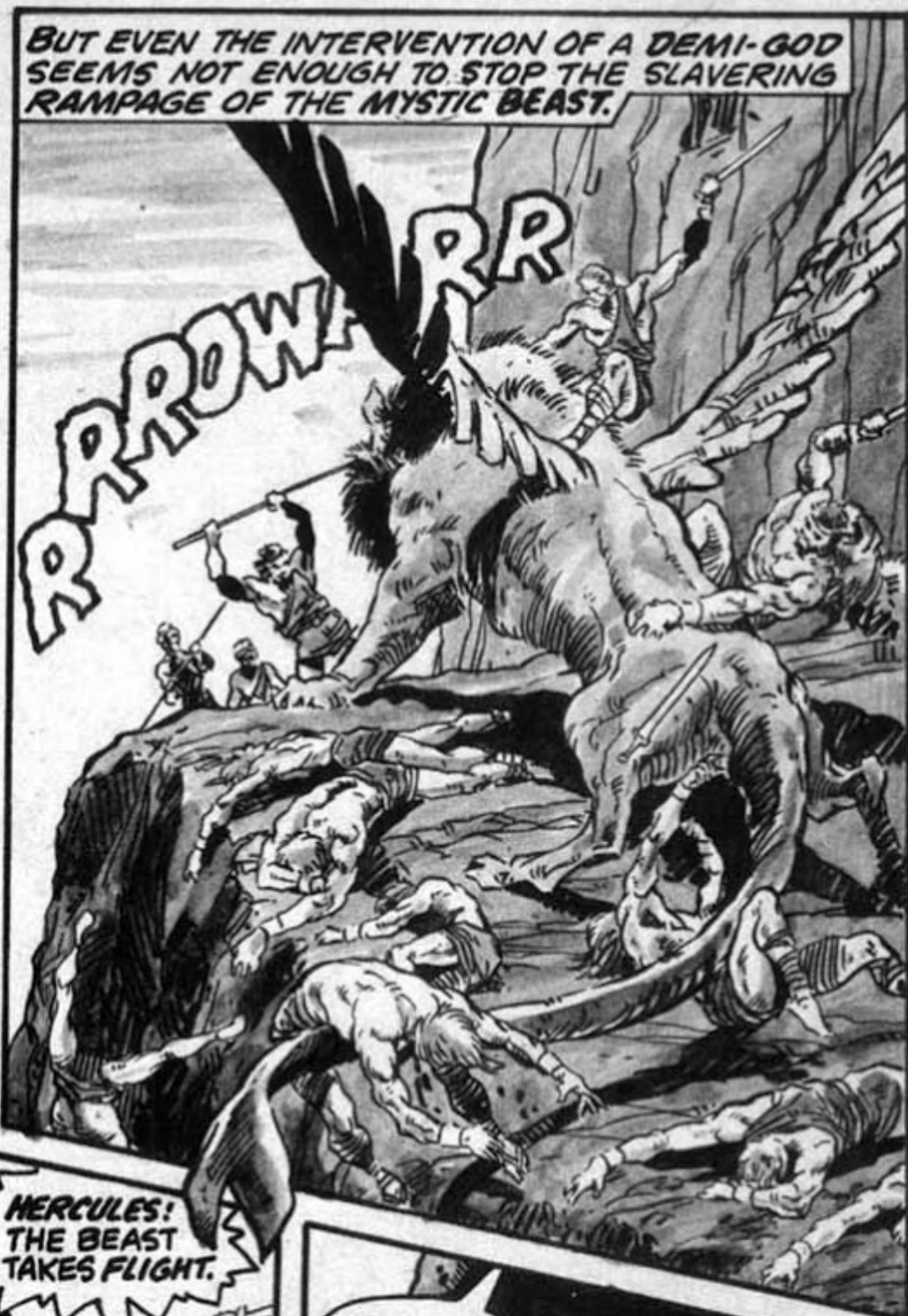
FOR A MOMENT, THE PRINCE OF POWER IS TOO STUNNED TO REACT...

... BUT THEN THE SCREAMS OF THE VICTIMS REACH HIS EARS.



HERE, AEGISTHUS!

BY MY FATHER'S BEARD--
HERCULES IS HERE!!



BUT EVEN THE INTERVENTION OF A DEMI-GOD SEEMS NOT ENOUGH TO STOP THE SLAVERING RAMPAGE OF THE MYSTIC BEAST.

RRROW RR



HERCULES!
THE BEAST TAKES FLIGHT.

LEAP CLEAR, LAD!
LEAP CLEAR!



I-- I CANNOT!
IT RISES TOO HIGH!

THEN SECURE YOUR HOLD, LAD!
GRIP TIGHT THE MAD BEAST'S MANE!

FOR IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO COME TO THE PRINCE OF POWER--



THEN 'TIS HERCULES WHO MUST COME TO YOU!

UNABLE TO CLIMB UP HIGHER ON THE CREATURE FOR FEAR OF BEING DROPPED, HERCULES' MIND DRIFTS BACK DAYS EARLIER...

SO, LAD, D'YE THINK THE GOLDEN-HAIRED WENCH WAS WORTH THE TROUBLE WE'VE BEEN PUT TO?

IT WASN'T HER HAIR THAT INTERESTED ME, HERCULES! SHE HAD OTHER--

--MORE ENDEARING QUALITIES!



QUALITIES SHE SHARES WITH THE REST OF HER SEX, JASON!

BY THE GODS! THE WOMAN MUST LOVE ME!

OH, SHE GAVE ME THIS RING TO GIVE YOU ERE WE DEPARTED!

THAT STONE IS WORTH AT LEAST A SHIP AND CREW!



WHICH IS WHAT IT WILL BUY, CAPTAIN! THE ARGO HAS BEEN ROTTING ON THE DOCKS SINCE OUR LAST VOYAGE--

--AND HER CREW HAS GROWN SO USED TO LANDED WAYS--

--THAT WE SHALL HAVE TO PUMP THE SALT BACK INTO THEM!



SPEAK I NOT THE TRUTH OLD ONE?

IS IT TRULY THOU, MILORD?

DO WE SAIL AGAIN?



AYE, OLD ONE!
WE SAIL!

WHERE HAVE
THE DOCK-
BILGE OF PYLOS
ALLOWED THE
ARGO TO
ANCHOR?

THERE, MY
PRINCE! AMIDST
THE GARBAGE
OF THE MERCHANT
SCOWS!



THEN WE MUST CLEAN
THE CABBAGE STINK
FROM OUT HER SAILS,
OLD MAN--

--BY UNFURLING
THEM AND TURNING
THEM INTO THE WIND!

TIMON!
ORESTUS!

AYE, MY
PRINCE?



WE SAIL, ORESTUS--
WITH THE FIRST TIDE!
YOUR CAPTAIN HAS MADE
HIMSELF... UNWELCOME
AMONGST THE GENTRY
OF PYLOS, AND--

JASON? UNWELCOME?
THERE WAS A WENCH
NO DOUBT!

TELL US, HERCULES!
DID SHE HAVE HAIR
THE COLOR OF THAT
FLEECE HE HAD US
WIN FOR HIM?



THAT SHE DID,
CRATES! THOUGH
METHINKS I DID
DETECT TRACES
OF DYE AMONGST
THE GOLD!

HE LIES, SAILORS -- BUT
NO MATTER! HER JEWELRY
IS MORE THAN ADEQUATE
TO MAKE UP FOR ANY
VANITY... MAY AFFECT--

--AND IT HAS BROUGHT
OUR RELEASE FROM
THESE WRETCHED
DOCKS!

WHITHER ARE WE
BOUND,
CAPTAIN?



FOR TREASURE,
LADS-- ENOUGH
TO SOFTEN A
HARD KING'S
HEART!

WE'RE
BOUND FOR
GLORY, MY
LADS--

AND ENOUGH
TO WIN A PRINCESS--
DYED OR PURE!

--FOR THE
ISLE OF
FEAR!!

MAY ZEUS
PRESERVE US!

MAY ZEUS INDEED... FOR THESE STOUT MEN
HAVE GREAT NEED OF SUCH DIVINE PRE-
SERVATION NOW.

SAILORS!
WHY RETURN
YOU IN SUCH
HASTE?

AND
WHERE ARE
OUR CAPTAINS--
HERCULES AND
JASON?

GONE TO
HADES ON
THE BACK OF
A WINGED
DEMON
OLD MAN!



LOOSE THE SAILS
--OR WE MAY YET BE
NEXT WHEN THE GRIFFIN
HUNTS!



GRIFFIN?
ARE YE MAD,
WARRIOR?

DO YOU,
OLD MAN? CANST
THOU LOOK AT THAT
WHICH ARISES FROM
THE WAVES--

BY THE
TRIDENT
OF
POSEIDON!

YE HAVE
DESERTED THY
CAPTAIN AND THY
PRINCE-- AND YE
SPEAK TO ME OF
FABLES AND
MONSTERS? WAR-
RIOR, I NAME YE LIAR!

--AND STILL
DOUBT THE WORDS
OF THEY WHO HAVE
SEEN!!



THE BEHEMOTH RISES,
BRINGING WITH IT
THE STENCH OF UNTOLD
DEPTHS OF THE SEA.



ARE YE MEN, ARGONAUTS--

MUST AN OLD MAN NOTCH ARROW TO BOW AND TEACH YE THE WAY OF WARRIORS?!

--OR BOYS THAT YE WOULD RUN FROM A CREATURE OF SALT AND SLIME?

ZWAANG

YEEAAH

SKRAAAAAA



BY HERA! MY SHAFT HAS ONLY MADDENED THE BEAST!

THE SHIP! IT RAMS THE SHIP!!



AND NOW WE MUST FIGHT -- LIKE MINNOWS TRYING TO BRING DOWN A SHARK!

MAY APHRODITE WATCH OVER US--

--FORTHIS DAY WE--



-- DIE BEAST!
WHY DON'T YOU DIE!?

IT WILL, LAD! YOUR SWORD HAS FOUND ITS HEART!



THE GRIFFIN FALLS!

AYE, SON OF ZEUS--

-- BUT SO DO WE!!



TRUE ENOUGH LAD-- BUT WITH THAT MOUNTAIN OF FLESH TO CUSHION YOU--

-- I SHOULD WORRY LESS ABOUT THE FALL THEN WHERE THE BEAST HAS BROUGHT US!

WHRUMP!



'TIS PLAIN THE GRIFFIN WAS A CREATION OF THE GORGON, HERCULES!

GODS, WHAT MADNESS! I DO BEGIN TO WONDER IF ALCESTE IS TRULY WORTH IT!

OF COURSE SHE ISN'T, LAD! WHAT WOMAN IS? BUT COME--



-- THE QUEST AWAITS US STILL, AND IN THE FULFILLMENT OF IT WILL WE FIND THAT WHICH IS PRECIOUS ABOVE ALL ELSE!

GLORY!!

A PATH, HERCULES! CUT FROM LIVING STONE-- LEADING UPWARDS TO A TEMPLE--

-- AND FLANKED BY THE STATUES OF GREEK WARRIORS! SCULPTED AS IF AT ANY MOMENT THEY WOULD LEAP FORTH AND FIGHT AGAIN!



NOT SCULPTED, FRIEND JASON! TRANSFORMED!

HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN THE TALES OF THE GORGON MEDUSA? HOW HER GAZE--



-- MAY TURN MEN TO STONE, HERCULES?

DO MEN STILL TELL THE OLD TALES? I HAD THOUGHT THEY WOULD HAVE GONE ON TO NEWER THINGS!

MEDUSA!!



IS IT SHE, HERCULES?

IS IT REALLY SHE?

DOES THE BOY DOUBT ME, OLYMPIAN? LET HIM COME FORTH AND SEE FOR HIMSELF!

STAND THY GROUND, LAD! HEED HER NOT!



YOU ARE SELFISH, HERCULES! THE BOY SENSES LIFE WITHIN ME! LIFE ETERNAL!

YOU ALREADY POSSESS IMMORTALITY, MAN-GOD--

--LET HIM NOW HAVE HIS CHANCE!

HER VOICE ... SO BEAUTIFUL...



JASON!!

HUSH, MAN-GOD! THE BOY HAS BUT TO TASTE OF THE GOLDEN APPLES--

--AND HE WILL BE AS AGELESS AS ARE WE!

SEE HOW HUNGRILY HE REACHES OUT FOR IT?



WITCH!

IT IS NOT LIFE HE REACHES OUT FOR--

-- BUT DEATH EVER-LASTING!

MY COWL--!!

YOU ARE RIGHT, OLYMPIAN! IT WAS DEATH HE SOUGHT AFTER--

YET MEDUSA DID NOT LIE! HE WILL LIVE FOREVER!

-- IMMORTALIZED IN STONE!

-- AND IT IS DEATH HE HAS FOUND!

AND YOU ARE NEXT, MAN-GOD--!



NO WITCH--



-- FOR I HAVE KEPT MY EYES TIGHT SHUT SINCE MY MACE THREW BACK THY COWL!

SPLOOSH!

AND AS LONG AS MY EYES DO NOT MEET YOURS-- HERCULES WILL ESCAPE THE FATE THOU HAST WROUGHT ON OTHERS!

GOOD, MAN-GOD!
KEEP SHUT YOUR
EYES--

--AND MEDUSA
WILL SEEK OUT YOUR
THROAT AND OFFER YOU
AS SACRIFICE TO
YOUR THRICE-
ACCURSED FATHER!

BLEAT,
HERCULES!
BLEAT LIKE
THE SHEEP
YOU ARE!

BY THE
GODS, DEMON!
YOU'LL NOT
HAVE
HERCULES!

THERE YOU ARE
WRONG, MAN-GOD!

UUUUKK...

STHUK!

WHO--??

OLD
ONE!!

THE SHIP IS
SAVED, CAPTAIN
--THOUGH THE
CREW IS LOST!

I THANK
THEE FOR
LETTING
ME DIE...

...AS A
WARRIOR!

THE PRINCE OF POWER LAYS THE OLD
WARRIOR'S HEAD TO THE GROUND, AND
THE CRIES OF LIFE WELL UP AROUND THEM.

WITH THE GORGON'S DEATH, THOSE
TRANSFORMED BY HER GAZE RETURN
AT LAST FROM THEIR DREAM OF STONE!

AND AFTER THE
OLD MAN HAS
BEEN ENTOMBED
WITH FULL HONORS...

THE GORGON
IS DEAD! THE
GOLDEN APPLES
OURS!

THE ARGO
SURVIVES TO
CARRY YOU--HER
NEW CREW--BACK
TO PYLOS--

--WHILE HERCULES
AND I GO ON AHEAD
MOUNTED ON THE
MEDUSA'S WINGED
STEED!

JOIN US IN PYLOS
ARGONAUTS--FOR IN
THAT CITY WILL WE
FIND GLORY!

AND IN PYLOS...

AGAIN I BESEECH THEE FOR THY DAUGHTER'S HAND, LORD KREON!

SURELY THE BRIDE-PRICE I OFFER IS SUFFICIENT!

MORE THAN SUFFICIENT, IONUS! MUCH MORE--

--AND ENOUGH! YOU SHALL HAVE MY DAUGHTER, BY MY COMMAND.

AND THE WEDDING WILL TAKE PLACE--

IMPOSS-- NO ONE HAS EVER RETURNED FROM THE ISLE OF FEAR!!

THIS IS SOME TRICK OF YOU AND THE OLYMPIAN!

COUNT THE GOLD, THEN, KING--

--SEE THAT IT IS THE GORGON'S AND THEN I'LL CLAIM YOUR DAUGHTER AS MY BRIDE!

IN HADES, LIAR KING!

JASON!!

AYE, KREON! THE QUEST IS DONE!

IS HE DEAD, JASON?

AS DEAD AS COULD BE WISHED, ALCESTE!

DO YOU HEAR, PEOPLE OF PYLOS? THE KING IS DEAD!!

THE ARGONAUTS HAVE SEEN TO THE GUARDS, JASON! METHINKS THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR FROM KREON'S LACKEY'S!

THOU SPEAKEST TRUTH, HERCULES!

THEN LET IT BE KNOWN THAT I, JASON, CAPTAIN OF THE AGRO--

--DO CLAIM THE THRONE OF PYLOS AND THE PAST-KING'S DAUGHTER FOR MY OWN!

TYRANNY IS DEAD, CITIZENS!

LONG LIVE JASON! LONG LIVE THE KING!!

AND LONG LIVE GLORY LAD! FORGET NOT THAT!

HERCULES! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

AWAY, LAD! I'VE NO PATIENCE WITH KINGS OR THRONES--

--AND I GIVE YOU A WEEK BEFORE THE WENCH THROWS YOU OVER FOR ANOTHER!

'TIS NOT MY WAY, LAD! I PREFER A GOOD BATTLE-- MACE IN HAND--

--OR A WOMAN WHO HAS PROPER RESPECT FOR THE FACT THAT I BE THE SON OF ZEUS!

FARE THEE WELL, JASON! MAYBE OUR PATHS SHALL MEET AGAIN--

-- WHEN YOU'VE GIVEN UP HARD THRONES FOR THE FEEL OF A DECK ONCE MORE BENEATH YOUR FEET!

