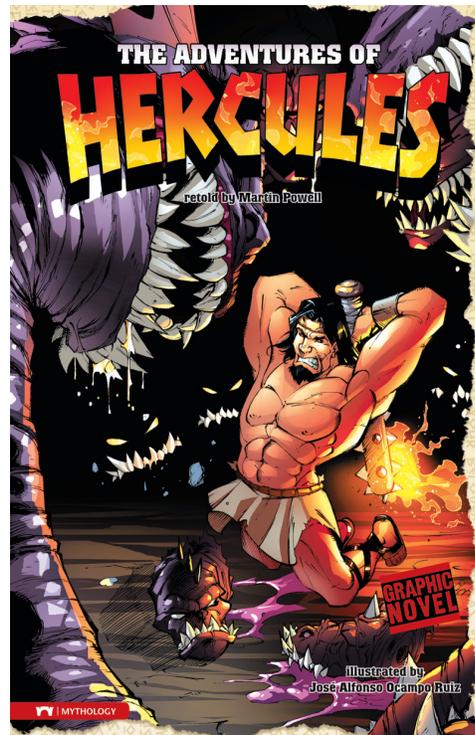




## READER'S THEATER



### The Adventures of Hercules retold by Martin Powell

**Characters:**

- Artemis** – reads slightly below grade level
- King Eurytheus** – reads at grade level
- Hercules** – reads below grade level
- Soldiers (group)** – struggling reader
- Narrator** – reads above grade level

**Genre:** Mythology

**Ages:** 10-15

# The Adventures of Hercules page 1

**Narrator:** Years ago, in the kingdom of Nemea, there lived a terrible beast that had killed many men. It was known as the Nemean Lion. No weapons could pierce its skin. The beast was believed to be unbeatable . . . until it met Hercules!

Hercules was the strongest man in the world. His great power came from his father, Zeus, king of the gods. Hercules' mother, however, was a mortal woman. It was because Hercules was half man that he cared so much for humans.

**Hercules:** I swear I will do all I can to protect the people of Greece for as long as I live!

**Narrator:** Hercules feared nothing. Not even the invulnerable Nemean Lion, killer of a thousand men. Hercules quickly defeated the beast with his bare hands.

**Hercules:** It is accomplished. The first Labor.

**Narrator:** After his quest, Hercules returned to King Eurystheus.

**King Eurytheus:** I'm surprised you're still alive, Hercules. You have killed that which could not be killed! It seems you deserve your reputation.

**Hercules:** I await your instructions, King Eurytheus.

**Narrator:** The cruel King's power over the mighty Hercules puzzled everyone — especially his Queen.

**King Eurytheus:** You already know your next Labor. Now get out! You're frightening my Queen!

**Narrator:** It was a secret the King and Hercules alone did share. Hercules' second Labor sent him to the lair of a creature best known as the Hydra. It was thought to be a giant snake, but no one knew for sure. None had lived to tell the tale.

**Hercules:** Remember, you soldiers are here only as witnesses. Let me handle this feat.

**Narrator:** Suddenly, a menacing "HISSSSSS" came from inside the cave Hercules stood in front of.

## The Adventures of Hercules page 2

**Soldiers:** It's the Hydra!

**Hercules:** Get back all of you! Now!

**Soldiers:** Look at the size of it!

**Hercules:** Stay behind me! My lion-skin armor will protect us!

**Soldiers:** Look! A third creature! How many monsters are there?!

**Narrator:** A huge “RRRRROOAAAARRRRR!!!” ripped through the air as the nine-headed monster emerged from its cave.

**Hercules:** There is only one!

**Soldiers:** It will take all of us to slay this creature!

**Hercules:** No! Stay behind me! Only one of us must risk his life!

**Narrator:** With a mighty blow, Hercules severed one of the Hydra's heads . . . only to see two more heads grow in its place! But Hercules had a plan.

**Hercules:** Throw me your torch, soldier! Quickly!

**Narrator:** Hercules severed the Hydra's heads and quickly seared the wounds shut with a torch so they could not grow back. After slaying the Hydra, Hercules dipped his arrows in its poisonous blood. Then, he and the soldiers returned to the king's palace.

**King Eurytheus:** Hercules, your victory surprises me once again. For your third Labor, you must hunt the magical deer that is sacred to the goddess Artemis.

**Hercules:** As you wish, King.

**Narrator:** Finally, after tracking the mystical creature for over a year, Hercules caught sight of the sacred deer. But before he could shoot, Artemis, the Nature Goddess, entangled Hercules with the roots of a tree.

**Hercules:** I will not be bound!

## The Adventures of Hercules page 3

**Artemis:** Hercules, son of Zeus! How dare you trespass here! Your arrow is coated in the Hydra's venomous blood. You could have slain my sacred deer.

**Hercules:** I had no choice, noble Artemis. I serve King Eurytheus of Mycenae.

**Artemis:** Eurytheus is protected by Hera, almighty Queen of the Gods. Even I do not have the power to oppose her. My pet will follow you, Hercules. Complete your quest and return him to me unharmed.

**Narrator:** Hercules brought the magic deer to the King. Eurytheus became furious at the hero's triumph.

**King Eurytheus:** Agh! How is this possible?! Hercules should have failed many times before!

**Narrator:** Still, no one understood what forced Hercules to follow the King's orders.

**King Eurytheus:** See how you handle this challenge, Hercules! For your fourth Labor, you must hunt the Giant Boar of Mount Erymanthus!

**Hercules:** I will follow your orders as always, my King.

**Narrator:** And so, Hercules set off once again. The Giant Boar lived atop the steep cliffs of Mount Erymanthus. Hercules had finally reached the top, when suddenly . . .

Will Hercules be able to defeat the Giant Boar of Mount Erymanthus? What other Labors must he complete? Why is he forced to serve King Eurytheus?

**THE END**