

Prod. #V0117

HERCULES

"Surprise"

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FINAL DRAFT
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HERCULES

"Surprise"

Cast List

HERCULES
IOLAUS (ee O luss)
ALCMENE (alk MAY nee)

HERA (HAIR uh)
CALLISTO (kah LEE stoh)
FALAFEL (full AW ful)
JASON (JAY son)
IPHICLES (IF uh cleez)
SPHINX

Dialogue References:

XENA (ZEE nah)

HERCULES

"Surprise"

Set List

INTERIORS:

TARTARUS (TAR tar us)
THRONE ROOM
CASTLE CORRIDOR
IPHICLES' CASTLE
LABYRINTH ENTRANCE
CASTLE HALLWAY
LABYRINTH OF THE GODS
LABYRINTH CAVERN
CASTLE KITCHEN
LABYRINTH - VINE TRAP
GATES OF HEPHAESTUS (heh FESS stus)
TREE OF LIFE CAVERN

EXTERIORS:

CORINTH
IPHICLES' CASTLE
WOODS
GARDEN DREAMSCAPE
HILLSIDE
BALCONY

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HERCULES

"Surprise"

Chronology

NIGHT 1
DAY 1

SCENE #1
SCENES #2 - 58

HERCULES

"Surprise"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. TARTARUS - NIGHT

1

Fire, stench, voices wail through Tartarus: "Help... me."
Desperate faces, hollow eyes. A woman hangs on a wall in a
dank corner, lifts her head up, screams in rage and pain.

CALLISTO

A RUMBLING O.S. and she looks around -- reacting as the
shape of a WOMAN stretches from the surface of a nearby
cave wall... slithers through the wall like a snake.

HERA (V.O.)

Poor Callisto. Such rage unfulfilled.

CALLISTO

Who are you?

HERA (V.O.)

A fan. Your crusade against Xena...
so... vibrant. Too bad it had to end
unsatisfied. Look at you.

CALLISTO

Hera... afraid to show your ugly face?

HERA (V.O.)

(laughing)

Your irreverence endears you to me.
Like a pet...

CALLISTO

What do you want?

HERA (V.O.)

To see you smile again. I offer you a
another chance to carry on your
mission against Xena.

CALLISTO

(her interest aroused)

I'm listening...

HERA (V.O.)

I'll give you one more day of life...
and a chance at immortality. But if
you fail, you're back here forever.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

CALLISTO

What do I have to do?

HERA (V.O.)

Kill my bastard step-son, the man who
redeemed your mortal enemy...

The gears turn; Callisto begins to laugh...

CALLISTO

Hercules...

Hera's shape stretches suddenly -- arms extended, moving
like a shot, reaching for Callisto. As they grab her:

2 EXT. CORINTH - DAY

2

Villagers mill through the streets, enjoying the warm
weather. HERCULES and IOLAUS move along.

IOLAUS

What a day! Warm air, nature
blooming...

A beautiful girl passes, breezily dressed. Iolaus moons:

IOLAUS

(continuing)
... nature blooming.

Hercules tries in vain to smile.

IOLAUS

(continuing)
Cheer up, Herc. It's your birthday.

HERCULES

Don't remind me.

IOLAUS

Come on. Everyone has them. And I
think you have a few more years before
you have to worry about losing your
hearing, the hair falling out...

FALAFEL (O.S.)

Hercules! Iolaus!

They turn to see FALAFEL running up. Iolaus looks concerned
as Falafel grabs Herc's hand and pumps it vigorously.

FALAFEL

Let me be the first to extend my best
wishes on your special day.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

HERCULES

Thanks, Falafel.

FALAFEL

I've prepared a delicious cake for the party. You like chocolate, yes?

IOLAUS

Falafel!

FALAFEL

What's the matter, Iolaus? You don't look so good.

IOLAUS

It was supposed to be a surprise.

Falafel's aghast, starts backing away...

FALAFEL

Oh, no... my sincerest apologies. I didn't know...

HERCULES

(a glare for Iolaus)

Neither did I.

FALAFEL

Yes, well... please excuse me, I have to go stuff a chicken.

Falafel disappears. Hercules turns to Iolaus, who shrugs.

IOLAUS

Look... Alcmene wanted to throw you a surprise party. I think it's a good idea. Might make you feel better.

HERCULES

I'm sorry if I seem ungrateful, it's just that... before Hera destroyed my family...

(a pained memory)

I spent my last birthday with the kids... took them to the lake... it was beautiful. Ilea made me promise we'd go back every year.

(the pain gets worse)

I couldn't keep that promise, Iolaus. I don't feel right celebrating that.

IOLAUS

You'll never stop missing them, especially on days like this, but...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: 2

2

IOLAUS (cont'd)
there's a still lot of people around
here who care about you... would like
to celebrate with you.

Hercules looks at his friend, smiles.

HERCULES

Thanks.

IOLAUS

I've got to go.
(splits off)
Alcmene's. Noon. Promise you'll act
surprised, okay?

HERCULES

I think I can do that.

Our boys go their separate ways.

3 EXT. IPHICLES' CASTLE (ESTABLISHING) - DAY

3

4 INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

4

Iolaus, ALCMENE, JASON, and IPHICLES stand around, drinking
punch. Falafel hovers over a banquet table behind them,
preparing a floral display. A pile of presents nearby.

JASON

You know, Hercules isn't the easiest
person to shop for.

IPHICLES

Tell me about it. He gave away the
present I got for him last year.

ALCMENE

Do you think he'll be surprised?

IOLAUS

(glaring at Falafel)
I certainly haven't told him anything.

ALCMENE

Oh, I hope he likes his gifts.

IPHICLES

Don't worry, Mother, you've done a
wonderful job.

JASON

Everything looks beautiful, darling.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

FALAFEL

I'll get the food.

As Falafel disappears into the kitchen:

CALLISTO (O.S.)

Excuse me...

They turn as Callisto enters, her face shadowed under a hooded cloak. In the half-light, she looks helpless as a lamb.

CALLISTO

I'm sorry to intrude, but I couldn't find a guard to announce me.

IPHICLES

We're having a celebration. They've been sent home for the day. Who are you?

CALLISTO

I've come to pay my respects. Last year my family was attacked on the road to Macedonia...

(near tears)

... my husband was killed. My children and I would have surely died if Hercules hadn't come along.

Iolaus furrows his brow; something strange about this story.

IOLAUS

Where'd you say this happened?

CALLISTO

(ignoring him)

I heard it was his birthday and I... wanted to leave a gift.

Alcmene consoles; puts an arm around Callisto's shoulder, leads her into the room. Iolaus shrugs off his suspicion as Falafel emerges from the kitchen carrying food.

ALCMENE

Poor dear... come, join us.

CALLISTO

Oh, no, I wouldn't dream of imposing.

ALCMENE

Please, make yourself at home.

Callisto nods her thanks to Alcmene, breaks off from the family and makes her way to the punch bowl.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 2

ANOTHER ANGLE

As the family continues their conversation in b.g., Callisto pulls out a VIAL of iridescent liquid with her gnarled hand. She pours it into the bowl and turns.

CALLISTO

More punch, anyone?

Off her innocent offer...

5 INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - DAY

Hercules enters the castle. Silence. He decides to play along. He crosses to the closed doors of the throne room.

HERCULES

Hello... anybody here?

He opens the doors and enters -- then reacts to:

6 INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

All of his friends and family lie dead on the floor. Callisto calmly removes her hood and smiles.

CALLISTO

Surprise!

Off Herc's shock we:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

7 INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

7

Hercules rushes to Alcmene's side; her chest rises, falls. She's alive, but unconscious. Same with the other guests. Callisto calmly unwraps one of the birthday presents.

CALLISTO

My, my... looks like somebody spiked the punch. I'm glad I don't drink.

HERCULES

What have you done to them?

CALLISTO

You've never witnessed the effects of Xynthalian venom? It attacks the mind. The victims become susceptible to their wildest imaginings. By sunset, your friends will be driven mad... if they don't kill each other first. The antidote is very rare.

Hercules fights restraint...

HERCULES

What do you want?

CALLISTO

Safe passage through the Labyrinth of the Gods to the Tree of Life.

(motions to the others)

One bite of its fruit cures any illness... or madness.

HERCULES

And a whole one will make you immortal. Who are you?

CALLISTO

We have so much to celebrate today. Your birth... my re-birth. I'm Callisto.

Hercules echoes the name like it's poison:

HERCULES

Callisto... Xena killed you...

She pulls a new pair of Hercules' token leather pants from the gift box.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

CALLISTO

Hera was kind enough to grant me a one day reprieve. You see, we need each other, Hercules.

(holds up gnarled hand)

I don't have the strength to defeat the labyrinth's traps, and you won't find your way without me.

(admiring the gift)

Nice pants.

HERCULES

You're insane.

CALLISTO

Just misunderstood. Shall we go... partner?

Off Herc's disgust...

8 EXT. WOODS - DAY

8

Hercules walks ahead, and Callisto can barely keep up.

CALLISTO

This is very exciting... to be paired up with the man who turned, or should I say, turned on, Xena. I feel like I know you.

HERCULES

You do, huh?

CALLISTO

Fate has brought us together... though I must admit, you're not at all what I expected.

HERCULES

Sorry to disappoint you.

CALLISTO

On the contrary, I couldn't be more pleased. That look in your eyes, back in the castle... fire, hate... I wonder, did you wear the same face when you watched your children die?

He stops, fixes her with a steely, concentrated stare.

HERCULES

Don't push me.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

CALLISTO
Oh, but that's the beauty of it. I
can. There's a new and exciting
side of you just waiting to come out.
I can feel it.

Off Hercules...

9 INT. IPHICLES' CASTLE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

9

Iolaus slowly opens his eyes, squinting at the flood of
light. He rubs his head, sits up.

IOLAUS
Whoa... what a party.

IPHICLES (O.S.)
Iolaus?

Iolaus turns, sees Iphicles fighting for balance.

IPHICLES
(continuing)
What happened?

Iolaus extends an arm; they help each other up.

IOLAUS
Beats me. Maybe it was the food.

FALAFEL (O.S.)
I heard that.

They turn, see Falafel getting to his feet. Nearby, Jason
helps Alcmena up.

IOLAUS
Look.

Iolaus points; all turn to see:

THE PUNCH

It has turned midnight black. They stare, wide-eyed.

IPHICLES
What's going on?

Iolaus sniffs the punch, recoils.

IOLAUS
We've been drugged. Is everyone okay?

Alcmena fearfully looks to Jason.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

ALCMENE

Where's Hercules?

Falafel examines the open presents on the table, fingering Hercules' pants.

FALAFEL

Looks like he's been here.

IOLAUS

He opened his presents while we slept?
I don't think so.

ALCMENE

Who could have done this?

IPHICLES

That woman... where is she?

ALCMENE

Something terrible has happened, I
know it.

JASON

Let's not jump to any conclusions.
We'll search the castle.

Iphicles takes Alcmene's hand.

IPHICLES

I'll go with mother.

JASON

Iolaus and I will take the west wing.

The group splits up, leaving behind a protesting Falafel.

FALAFEL

What about me?

IOLAUS

Stay here in case Hercules comes back.

They disappear into the corridor. Falafel calls after them.

FALAFEL

By myself?!

IOLAUS

If anything happens, yell!

Falafel turns away, ambles over to the table as he dabs at his forehead; a noticeable build-up of perspiration there -- the first symptom of the poison.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 2

9

FALAFEL

Yell. Wonderful. Big help.

He grabs a napkin to wipe his brow and notices --

FALAFEL'S POV

The bowl of noodles has become infested with worms!

BACK TO FALAFEL

as he does a double-take. He looks again and --

FALAFEL'S POV

The bowl of noodles is back to normal.

BACK TO FALAFEL

Off his confusion:

10 INT. LABYRINTH ENTRANCE - DAY

10

Hercules and Callisto enter. A series of torches line the wall. Hercules pulls one down; a leather pouch is fastened to it. He unties the pouch, feels the weight.

HERCULES

Oil. We'll use it to keep the torch lit.

He attaches it to his belt, then pushes through cobwebs.

CALLISTO

Poor baby. Afraid of the dark?

HERCULES

Let's get on with it.

CALLISTO

Spoil sport. Just because I've poisoned your friends doesn't mean we can't be nice to each other.

HERCULES

I'd rather trade places with Sisyphus.

CALLISTO

Don't be too angry with me, Hercules. After all, I'm not the one who hung a bullseye on your family.

HERCULES

What's that supposed to mean?

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

CALLISTO

Think about it. Your children would still be alive if they weren't your children. Your love is a curse.

HERCULES

What's the alternative, be like you? Alone, trapped in your hate? I'd rather take my chances.

CALLISTO

Then you are a selfish fool. Tell me, late at night... all alone in the dark... do you hear the sound of your children screaming?

Hercules' face tightens; she's dancing on his main and central nerve.

CALLISTO

(continuing)

Do you lie awake wondering if there was something more you could have done? Maybe if you'd gotten home sooner, or been more respectful to Hera...

He turns on her like a shot.

HERCULES

Drop it!

(regaining his composure)
I wouldn't expect someone like you to understand.

Callisto returns his glare.

CALLISTO

Oh, but I do understand... more than you know. I saw my family slaughtered like helpless animals, too.

HERCULES

Didn't learn much from it, did you?

CALLISTO

I learned how to get what I want, no matter what. Realize, Hercules, that your friends are still alive because I've allowed it.

HERCULES

Yeah, you're a real humanitarian.

Callisto smiles as she moves on ahead.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 2

10

CALLISTO

I bet you say that to all the girls.

Off Hercules...

11 INT. CASTLE HALLWAY - DAY

11

Alcmene and Iphicles search the castle for Our Hero.

ALCMENE

This is all my fault. I should never have let that stranger in.

Iphicles wipes his sweaty brow (the first symptom).

IPHICLES

Hercules is a big boy, he can take care of himself.

ALCMENE

I know you're right, but I so wanted this to be a special day for him.

IPHICLES

I'll bet you did. After all, he is Corinth's most famous son. Maybe I should declare a holiday in his name. Would that make you feel better?

Alcmene reacts to his indignant tone.

ALCMENE

Why are you talking like this?

IPHICLES

Because he's brought nothing but trouble to my kingdom!

ALCMENE

How can you say that? He's your brother...

IPHICLES

One big, happy family, are we? Tell me, dear Mother, who insures your safety every... single... day? And where is Hercules through it all? He graces us with his presence when he's not too busy saving the world.

ALCMENE

Iphicles, please... you're not yourself.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

IPHICLES

Wrong! I'm just not who you want me
to be! You think Hercules should have
been king.

He moves forward... slowly...

IPHICLES

(continuing)

Well, there can only be one king.

Alcmene's backed against the wall. Iphicles leans in close.

IPHICLES

(continuing)

And nobody's going to change that.
Not even you.

She stares wide-eyed in disbelief and horror. Iphicles
turns suddenly, stomps away. Alcmene watches him go, hurt
and confused, then reacts to a VOICE:

"HERCULES" (O.S.)

Mother.

Alcmene looks up to see an apparition: HERCULES.

"HERCULES"

(continuing)

It's going to be all right.

Off Alcmene's shock...

12 INT. LABYRINTH OF THE GODS - DAY

12

Hercules and Callisto approach the labyrinth interior. A
stone SPHINX looks down from above. Callisto admires the
decaying sculpture.

CALLISTO

Beautiful.

She moves toward the entrance to the interior.

CALLISTO

(continuing)

An open door's like a friendly
invitation.

Suddenly, the Sphinx comes to life, blows a wall of flame,
blocking the cave. ROAR!

HERCULES

You were saying?

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

SPHINX

All who seek passage must first answer
my riddle. Fail, and you will die.

HERCULES

Doesn't leave much room for error.

SPHINX

Give a name to this earthly conceit.
It is unchangeable but it can change
you. It can teach you or trap you.
All who reside in it are immortal, but
you can never go there.

CALLISTO

(turning to Hercules)

I hope you're as smart as you are
strong.

SPHINX

The answer lies before your eyes.
Choose your words before the sands run
their course.

The sphinx upends an hourglass. Hercules and Callisto face
off, in competition with each other as well as the clock.

CALLISTO

Unchangeable.

HERCULES

All who reside in it are immortal.

CALLISTO

Mt. Olympus!

A fireball begins brewing inside the Sphinx's mouth.

HERCULES

It's not a place, that's the trick.

CALLISTO

I don't see you coming up with
anything.

HERCULES

If you'd be quiet, I might be able to
think.

CALLISTO

I won't hold my breath for that.

The sphinx's mouth opens wider. The sand drops fast...
faster now... over halfway spent. Callisto notices.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 2

12

CALLISTO
(continuing)
We're running out of time!

HERCULES
Maybe that's it.

CALLISTO
Of course. Time!
Nothing. The fireball's getting bigger.

CALLISTO
(continuing)
It didn't work.
A shrug from our hero. Guess he was wrong.

CALLISTO
Any better ideas?

HERCULES
Wouldn't want to interrupt. You're
doing so well.

The sands are almost gone...

CALLISTO
Come on, think! It can teach you or
trap you.

Hercules, silent. Callisto's visibly worried now...

CALLISTO
(continuing)
Answer!

Herc points to:

THE HOURGLASS

as the last few grains drop through, time slipping by...

CALLISTO

Off her reaction we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

13 INT. LABYRINTH OF THE GODS - DAY

13

Callisto is worried. Either Hercules doesn't know the answer... or he won't say it in time. As the last grains of sand trickle out...

CALLISTO

Say something!

HERCULES

The answer lies, before your eyes.

Hercules turns squarely toward to the sphinx...

HERCULES

(continuing)

The past.

A tense, anxious beat, then the sphinx closes its mouth, lowers its head, allowing them safe passage. The wall of fire disappears. Callisto is pissed... and relieved.

CALLISTO

You took a big chance.

HERCULES

It's my nature. After you.

He ushers her out of the labyrinth, deeper into the cavern.

14 INT. CASTLE HALLWAY - DAY

14

Alcmene stands before the "Hercules" apparition.

ALCMENE

Hercules!

Overjoyed, she runs forward -- and passes right through him. She turns back, confused, suddenly frightened.

"HERCULES"

I've come to say goodbye, Mother.

ALCMENE

Goodbye?

"HERCULES"

I've crossed over to The Other Side.

Her darkest fear realized, Alcmene breaks down.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

ALCMENE

It's all my fault. I should have protected you.

"HERCULES"

It's too late for that, now.

ALCMENE

No... this can't be!

"HERCULES"

I'm sorry, Mother. I never wanted to be a hero, but you didn't give me any choice. There was no other way for this to end.

ALCMENE

Please... forgive me.

"Hercules" turns, begins to walk away.

"HERCULES"

Perhaps, in time. Goodbye.

She races after him.

ALCMENE

Wait! Let me come with you! Please!

"Hercules" stops. Slowly turns to her and smiles.

"HERCULES"

I was hoping you'd say that.

15 INT. LABYRINTH CAVERN - DAY

15

Dark. Then a flash of light as Hercules steps into the cavern with his torch. Callisto follows, then hurries ahead to a water well, almost limping, clearly losing energy.

HERCULES

Having trouble?

Callisto strains to pull the bucket up from the well.

CALLISTO

Don't worry. Soon, I'll be good as new. In the meantime, a little water should do the trick.

But she's too weak and drops the bucket. Curses her gnarled hand in frustration. Hercules shakes his head, grabs the rope, and begins to pull the bucket up.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

CALLISTO
(continuing)
Such a gentleman.

She takes the bucket, brings it to her lips. Sighs in satisfaction then wipes her mouth.

CALLISTO
(continuing)
The world doesn't deserve you.

HERCULES
It doesn't deserve you, either.

Her thirst slaked, she eyes him, smug and confident.

CALLISTO
We're not as different as you'd like to think, Hercules.

HERCULES
Really?

CALLISTO
We both believe the wicked should be punished... only I see something you don't.

HERCULES
And what is that?

CALLISTO
All people are wicked. They deserve everything they're going to get.

HERCULES
I've known too much good in the world to believe that.

CALLISTO
Good? Is that supposed to be a joke? If we mortals were 'good,' we wouldn't need someone like you around.

HERCULES
You've seen the darkest side of people. And the child who watched her parents die has my compassion. But you had a choice, and you chose evil. Not everyone makes that turn.

Callisto puts her hands together. A slow, mocking clap...clap...clap...

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 2

15

CALLISTO

Your faith in the world is touching.
Let's see how well it holds up at the
end of the day.

She stands and walks on. Hercules follows.

16 INT. CASTLE HALLWAY - DAY

16

An empty hallway. Iolaus and Jason emerge from parallel
doorways. They're both sweating.

JASON

Anything?

IOLAUS

No sign of him.

JASON

Now what?

They pause, wondering what to do. A strange helplessness on
Iolaus' face; a fear we've never seen before.

IOLAUS

It's hotter than Tartarus in here.
(wiping his brow)
I've got a bad feeling about this.
Let's go back.

JASON

What's wrong?

IOLAUS

You ever feel like... like your
strength is slowly seeping away? Like
you're losing a step... and there's
nothing you can do about it?

Jason suddenly freezes.

JASON

Did you hear that?

IOLAUS

Hear what? What?!?

JASON

There it is again.

Iolaus strains to hear, but...

IOLAUS

What? I don't hear anything.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

JASON
I'll be right back.

Jason bolts off down the hall, disappears around the corner.

IOLAUS
Wait! Jason!

And Iolaus takes off after him.

17 INT. CASTLE KITCHEN - DAY

17

Falafel, alone in the empty kitchen, races around preparing an "invisible" meal. Humming to himself, he douses wine over an imaginary roast, then begins chopping vegetables only he can see. Now, sweat pours down his face.

IPHICLES

then enters, stops short when he sees Falafel.

FALAFEL
King Iphicles! Just in time!

Falafel points to an empty corner of the kitchen:

FALAFEL
(continuing)
Would you be so kind as to hand me
that bowl of turnips?

Iphicles turns, scans the empty space Falafel's pointing to.

IPHICLES
What are you talking about? There's
nothing there.

FALAFEL
Are you blind? I'll get them myself.

Falafel moves to the empty corner and grabs the "bowl of turnips."

FALAFEL
So little time, so much to cook.

He places the "bowl of turnips" on the table, then moves to an empty crock over an unlit fireplace. Using potholders, he opens the crock, dips a ladle inside, pulls it out. Nothing in the ladle, but he extends it to Iphicles.

FALAFEL
Hot stuff. Watch the tongue.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

IPHICLES

Falafel...

FALAFEL

Be honest, you won't hurt my feelings.
I want everything to be perfect when
Hercules arrives. It's his birthday,
you know...

(leans in; sotto voce)

A surprise, not a word to anyone.

Iphicles, enraged at the mere mention of his brother's name,
knocks the ladle from Falafel's hand.

IPHICLES

Traitor!

The ladle lands behind a counter at the far end of the room.

FALAFEL

What did you do that for?

Falafel goes for the ladle, bends down behind the counter.
Dementia clouds Iphicles' face as he draws and raises his
sword, ready to kill. In doing so, he inadvertently slices
a rope that holds the suspended pot rack aloft. The whole
thing crashes down on him -- driving him from sight.

FALAFEL

stands up from behind the counter -- reacting to the noise.
He looks around -- no Iphicles -- and shrugs it off.

FALAFEL

I guess he didn't like my stew.

18 INT. LABYRINTH CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

18

Hercules and Callisto move along in tense silence.

CALLISTO

Why so quiet, Dearest?

HERCULES

I don't want to waste my breath.

CALLISTO

Tsk, tsk... you're not living up to my
expectations. I imagined you'd spend
the day trying to to convince me I can
change... like our beloved Xena.

HERCULES

Xena changed because she wanted to.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

CALLISTO

Did she? You know she watched me die.
(at his reaction)
It's ironic. Not long ago, you would
have joined me in bringing her down.

HERCULES

I don't think so. Our definitions of
justice aren't the same.

CALLISTO

True, very true. I believe she
deserves to die a slow death.

HERCULES

Vengeance isn't justice. If you
understood that, maybe you'd find
peace.

Callisto stops, closes her eyes, almost meditative.

CALLISTO

Peace. I imagined... I prayed... let
me die so I can find it. Tartarus
should have been a welcome change.

Her eyes open, a fire in them so deep it chills the bone.

CALLISTO

(continuing)
Instead I learned the true meaning of
torture... trapped with my hate and
nothing to do.

HERCULES

Immortality won't solve your problem.

Callisto lunges, grabs a jagged rock, slices her hand wide open. She cries out in fury, but seems to enjoy the pain. Hercules grimaces as she shows off the gaping wound.

CALLISTO

See this useless hand... gnarled,
crippled from trying to claw out of
quicksand... Xena's blood will flow
like this... only worse...

HERCULES

You know I can't let that happen.

A slow chuckle from Callisto turns into a laugh.

CALLISTO

But that's the most delicious irony of
all, you're going to make it possible.

She licks the blood off her wound. Off Hercules...

19 INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - DAY

19

Iolaus moves through the corridor, looking around.

IOLAUS

Jason? Where are you?

He rounds the corner and STOPS -- his eyes wide with disbelief because he finds himself in...

20 EXT. GARDEN DREAMSCAPE - DAY

20

A serene, lush garden of Eden. A gaggle of MAIDENS dance and play nearby. Iolaus looks around, reeling, not knowing what to make of this.

IOLAUS

Oh, boy...

21 INT. LABYRINTH - DAY

21

At another fork in the labyrinth, Callisto looks back and forth, wondering. Hercules senses her confusion.

HERCULES

Don't tell me we're lost.

CALLISTO

(mumbling to herself)

I can't seem to... left... or right... so many details. I knew I should have written it down.

HERCULES

Great.

CALLISTO

I think it's left.

She steps into the left passageway and -- instantly, a snake-like vine coils around her legs. It drops her to the floor and quickly drags her off into the darkness.

CALLISTO

(continuing)

Herrrrccuullleeeesss!

HERCULES

Guess it was right.

And he runs off after her.

22 INT. LABYRINTH - VINE TRAP - DAY

22

The vines drag Callisto into this cavern, seem to be multiplying. The eel-like tentacles wrap around Callisto, pinning her to the wall high off the ground. She looks around, laughing crazily at her predicament.

CALLISTO

Looks like I'm in a real bind!

Her laughter ECHOES out as:

23 INT. LABYRINTH - DAY

23

Hercules does his best to race after the sound.

CALLISTO (O.S.)

I'm right here...

ECHO: "Here...". Hercules turns the corner but runs into a DEAD END -- the labyrinth playing tricks on him.

HERCULES

Callisto! Keep talking!

24 INT. LABYRINTH - VINE TRAP - DAY

24

ECHO: "talking...". The vines tighten, wrap around Callisto's throat. She struggles to hold them off, but with her gnarled hand, it looks like a losing battle.

CALLISTO

That's... what I'm trying... to do!

25 INT. LABYRINTH - DAY

25

ECHO: "to do...". Hercules races after the sound of her voice -- smacks into another DEAD END. It seems impossible to trace her with any accuracy in this reverberating labyrinth. And Hercules is running out of time.

CALLISTO (O.S.)

Hercules... hurry... your friends...
if I die... they die...

ECHO: "they die...". Off Hercules' frustration, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

26 INT. LABYRINTH - DAY 26

Hercules continues his search. He hears Callisto's VOICE.

CALLISTO (O.S.)
If I die... they die...

27 INT. VINE TRAP - DAY 27

Callisto no longer has the strength to fend off the vines. They tighten like boa constrictors. She screams in panic.

28 INT. LABYRINTH - DAY 28

Hercules listens intently to the sound of her screams. He closes his eyes, trying to focus as he waits for more.

CALLISTO (O.S.)
Hercules.... Hurry!

ECHO: "hurry...". His head tilts to the left... no, right. Now he's starting to understand the pattern.

CALLISTO (O.S.)
Get in here! I can't... hold out...
much longer!

ECHO: "much longer...". Our hero begins moving. Slowly at first, then his stride quickens. He opens his eyes as he closes in. Turning a corner, he finally reaches --

29 INT. LABYRINTH - VINE TRAP - DAY 29

Callisto is near her last breath; she seethes, eyes bulging.

CALLISTO
What... took you... so long?!

HERCULES
Don't move!

Now the vines turn on Hercules, fly toward him. He punches them away, fighting his way forward.

HERCULES
The vines...
(WHACK!)
... of Dionysus...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

HERCULES (cont'd)

(WHACK!)

The more you struggle, the tighter they get.

CALLISTO

Why didn't you... tell me... before?

HERCULES

You didn't ask.

Hercules grabs two attacking vines, ties them together like a shoelace. As they struggle to undo themselves, he sets them on fire with the torch. They fizzle away to nothing.

CALLISTO

Hurry up!

Hercules scrambles toward Callisto, climbing from vine to vine before they get a firm hold on him. He reaches her, rips the vines from her neck, and breaks her free.

CALLISTO

falls -- but before she hits the ground, our hero drops to the floor -- and catches her in his arms.

CALLISTO

My hero.

HERCULES

Don't flatter yourself.

He sets her down and continues to battle the vines. Wham, bam, and they're out of there.

30 EXT. GARDEN DREAMSCAPE - DAY

30

Iolaus moves through the beautiful garden. The Maidens, like angels, dance around him, playful, innocent. He's loving this... and suddenly the maidens run off into nearby bushes. Gone.

IOLAUS

Wait! Where are you going?

LAUGHTER from the other side of the bushes. Iolaus moves forward, through the bushes, and as he does -- the sky begins to darken. Something's wrong. The landscape begins changing... sinister now... the wicked forest in a fairy tale. Iolaus looks up; grey clouds portend doom.

31 INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - DAY

31

Jason walks down the corridor, sword drawn. We HEAR feet scurry by -- Jason reacts. Somebody's there. Again, the feet... Jason whirls around, sees:

A SHADOW

disappear around the corner. Was that a person? Now he's scared. Wipes the sweat off his forehead and creeps along, sword at the ready.

32 EXT. GARDEN DREAMSCAPE - DAY

32

Iolaus pushes through the bushes, comes out the other side. There stand the Maidens -- but every face now looks grotesque, seems to harbor violence. Iolaus reacts as they part before him, revealing:

HIMSELF

only as a toothless old man, hobbling forth on a crutch.

IOLAUS

stunned.

IOLAUS

You're... me!

He shudders, tries to look away, but the old man -- obviously blind -- reaches an arthritic -- somehow menacing -- hand out for him, trying to grab him.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Iolaus turns and tries to run, but he can't seem to get away -- his feet are stuck in thick mud -- turns back as his drooling alter-ego again limps toward him.

IOLAUS

struggles... makes little headway... the alter-ego gaining... Iolaus trips, falls flat, looks up to find himself back in:

33 INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - DAY

33

Iolaus lies on the floor of the hallway. Jumps to his feet, dazed and frightened. Orients himself.

IOLAUS

What... is going... on?

He walks forward, calling out to his friend.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

IOLAUS

Jason?

And his voice ECHOES down the corridor to:

34 INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - DAY

34

Jason, who hears his name being called. But the voice sounds distorted, menacing...

OMINOUS VOICE

Jaaayyysssonnnn --

Those footsteps again... resonant, like giant tremors, approaching fast...

35 INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - ANOTHER PART - DAY

35

Iolaus continues forward, nearing the corner.

IOLAUS

Where are you?!

36 INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - DAY

36

Jason reacts, the footsteps louder... louder... just around the corner. He hides behind a pillar, readying his sword for a lethal blow.

37 INT. LABYRINTH - DAY

37

Hercules and Callisto move along, her face wild with anticipation.

CALLISTO

We're close. I'm so excited. I think the first thing I'll do is find the good Xena and rip out her tongue... just to hear her whistle an apology.

HERCULES

Don't be so impressed with yourself, Callisto. You're not out of here yet.

CALLISTO

Neither are you.

He stops, dead serious.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

HERCULES

Even if we make it to the center, even
if I save my friends, I won't stop
till you've paid for what you've done.

CALLISTO

Enough!

Callisto reels back and SLAPS him. Hercules reacts. It
takes every fiber in his being not to hit her back.

CALLISTO

(continuing)

There's no room that can hold me!
Haven't you figured that out? You're
the only person who can stop me. And
to do that, you'd have to kill me.
But you can't. Your misguided sense
of justice won't allow it.

HERCULES

You're overlooking something.

CALLISTO

Am I?

HERCULES

You've already been killed. All I
have to do is make sure you go back to
Tartarus... for good.

(moves in closer)

The only reason you're still standing
is because I need directions.

Fear registers briefly on Callisto's face, then slowly turns
into controlled rage.

CALLISTO

I've underestimated you.

HERCULES

Happens all the time.

CALLISTO

Fortunately, you're overlooking
something too.

HERCULES

And what's that?

CALLISTO

If I go back to the underworld, I
won't suffer alone.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: 2

37

HERCULES

What do you mean?

CALLISTO

I'll find your children. Aeson,
Klonus... little Ilea, was it? And
I'll dedicate eternity to making them
suffer.

HERCULES

Nice try, but they're safe in the
Elysian Fields.

CALLISTO

I got here, didn't I? I can get to
them.

HERCULES

No!!!

And that's it. The breaking point. Hercules lashes out,
grabs her neck and squeezes. Through her gasps:

CALLISTO

That's the spirit... unleash your
fury... kill me... I dare you.

A beat before Hercules reels his arm back and STRIKES! --
narrowly missing her face, punching a hole in the wall. He
lets her drop to the floor. She coughs, looks up... and
starts to laugh.

CALLISTO

(continuing)

Who's trapped with their hate now?

Off Hercules, ashamed, frustrated -- and furious.

38 INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - DAY

38

Iolaus turns the corner and -- Jason attacks! Swinging his
sword, he cuts Iolaus' shoulder. Iolaus falls to the floor.

JASON

Thought you could sneak up on me, did
you?

Iolaus rolls over and sees:

IOLAUS' POV

Himself as the Old Man. With unseeing, unfocused eyes,
spittle dripping from toothless gums, the wispy-haired
wraith raises a sword, ready to strike.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

ALTER-EGO

I'll kill you!

BACK TO SCENE - WIDE SHOT

As Jason brings the sword down, Iolaus quickly rolls out of the way. The sword strikes the stone floor with a CLANG! Iolaus jumps to his feet and bolts off in the other direction. Jason charges after him.

39 INT. CASTLE - DAY

39

The "Hercules" apparition leads Alcmene, trancelike, up a stairway. Alcmene slows; "Hercules" turns back to her.

"HERCULES"

We have to hurry, Mother. We don't have much time.

ALCMENE

But... Jason, Iphicles...

"HERCULES"

They'll be joining us soon. We'll all be together again.

Alcmene nods, an odd smile on her face.

ALCMENE

Yes.

And they continue up the stairway.

40 INT. GATES OF HEPHAESTUS - DAY

40

Hercules and Callisto reach the final turn of the labyrinth -- revealing three passageways.

HERCULES

Don't tell me you're confused again.

Callisto smiles, points far right.

CALLISTO

No. I'm certain about this one. Through here.

She allows Hercules to step through the passageway first -- then jumps back as large metal doors quickly close behind him. Hercules turns and jams the torch between the doors just before they slam shut.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

ANOTHER ANGLE

With great effort, he wedges his hands between the metal and pries them apart enough to jam his shoulders between them. The torch falls to the ground, the flame extinguishing as it rolls to Callisto's feet.

CALLISTO

I lied.

She grins, picks up the unlit torch, slowly running her fingers along the metal doors as Hercules stands, spread-eagled, trying to move the doors further apart.

CALLISTO

(continuing)

Lovely detail. Hephaestus is quite a craftsman.

Hercules goes nuts, tries to push harder. It's no use. The doors won't budge any more. Callisto looks up to the heavens and shouts.

CALLISTO

(continuing)

Hercules... delivered as promised, Hera. I've fulfilled my end of the bargain! Now it's your turn!

Behind her, a set of stone doors open with a grating sound, revealing another torch-lit cavern. Callisto begins to laugh.

HERCULES

You're not there yet.

CALLISTO

I've so enjoyed our time together, my love... but I can take it from here.

With that, she drives the unlit torch into his midsection, knocking the wind out of him. The metal doors slide in a little more.

CALLISTO

(continuing)

Are we having fun yet? Look at the bright side. You'll be reunited with your friends soon. This is for Xena.

WHACK! Right in the 'nads (or across the face if the Tower objects). Hercules shudders, loses his grip -- and the doors slide in even more.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: 2

40

CALLISTO
(continuing)
Goodbye, Hercules.

She throws the torch down, then turns and runs through the opening to the Tree of Life cavern.

41 INT. 'TREE OF LIFE' CAVERN - DAY

41

Callisto stands before the Tree of Life! It radiates an unearthly light. Callisto delicately picks a fruit from a branch... and takes a bite!

ANOTHER ANGLE

Color returns to her face. Her body begins to radiate the glow. She flexes her newly restored hand and closes her eyes: mission accomplished. Off her ecstasy...

42 INT. GATES OF HEPHAESTUS - DAY

42

We return to Hercules' agony. The doors slide in closer... closer... he seems helpless as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

43 INT. GATES OF HEPHAESTUS - DAY

43

The doors are moving in on Hercules; things don't look good.

ANOTHER ANGLE

In desperation, he kicks the torch at his feet, it ricochets off two walls -- then flies at his face. He barely ducks before it wedges between the closing doors. Our hero has about a half-second to dive away -- before the doors crush the metal torch into a cookie pan.

HERCULES

now charges into the Tree of Life cavern.

44 INT. 'TREE OF LIFE' CAVERN - DAY

44

As he enters -- Callisto lands on his shoulders, collapsing him to his knees -- finishing the last bite of fruit.

CALLISTO

Delicious. Too bad there won't be any left to take home.

She flips off, turns, and attacks -- grabbing Hercules by the head and slamming it down on the floor.

CALLISTO

(continuing)

You're going to die on your birthday.
How convenient.

She backflips, lands by the tree, pulls a torch from the wall. Hercules looks up in time to see her light the tree on fire and laugh.

HERCULES

Don't!

CALLISTO

Blow it out and make a wish.

45 INT. CASTLE KITCHEN - DAY

45

Falafel finishes cooking his imaginary stew. He wipes his sweating brow -- and a look of panic comes over his face.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

FALAFEL

Oh, no! Not enough. Hercules... big
appetite, huge! Must find meat!

He pulls a meat cleaver from a butcher block table and
begins to sharpen it furiously.

46 INT. 'TREE OF LIFE' CAVERN - DAY

46

As Hercules stumbles to his feet, Callisto swings the torch
with hurricane force. A sickening impact as Herc goes
flying to the other side of the room.

CALLISTO

Too bad we couldn't work out our
differences. We could have made an
unstoppable team.

She kicks. Whack! Hercules struggles to maintain
equilibrium:

HERCULES

Sorry, I already have a partner.

Callisto smiles, kicks a nearby lever; a stone door begins
to descend over the exit.

CALLISTO

Not for long.

47 INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - DAY

47

Iolaus runs through the castle, slows. Nobody behind him.
Breathes a sigh of relief -- and a sword suddenly slashes.
Iolaus ducks; Jason charges. Unarmed, Iolaus continues to
run as Jason follows.

48 INT. 'TREE' CAVERN - DAY

48

As the door continues to descend, Callisto springs, foot
coming out like a shot -- Hercules jerks back -- it misses
by inches. Meanwhile, Callisto spins, lands a back kick,
dropping Herc. He rolls, eyes the burning tree, crawls
toward it until Callisto's foot slams down on his neck.

CALLISTO

Uh-uh-uh... where are you going?

But he grabs her foot and flips her to the other side of the
cavern. He lunges for the tree -- reaching for one last
fruit untouched by the fire. Fighting back the flames...
almost there... got it! Whoops, Callisto's on him again,

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

knocks the fruit out of his hand -- it rolls away. Herc gets the upperhand, punches her back -- grabs the fruit. She looks up, dripping menace.

CALLISTO

(continuing)

Why can't you just die like a good boy?

HERCULES

Guess I don't know when to quit.

CALLISTO

Let me inspire you. Even if you could find your way back without me, you'll never do it in time to save your friends.

HERCULES

That's where you're wrong. I know something you don't.

CALLISTO

Oh?

Hercules removes the oil pouch from his belt and turns it over. A single drop falls out -- it's empty.

HERCULES

We're out of oil.

Hercules flings a flaming branch toward the entrance -- it ignites the trail of oil he's been spilling the entire way -- illuminating a path back to the labyrinth entrance.

HERCULES

(continuing)

Surprise! That goes all the way back to the entrance.

Callisto gasps, screams a high lunatic scream, and dives for Hercules. He jumps out of the way -- and she crashes into the Tree. Her face engulfed by flame, she reels back, flailing -- blinded.

CALLISTO

I can't see!

49 INT. CASTLE KITCHEN - DAY

49

Iphicles wakes under the fallen pot rack, dazed. His arms are pinned; struggles to free himself as he HEARS Falafel sharpening the cleaver O.S.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

IPHICLES

Falafel. Help.

FALAFEL

stops sharpening, surprised by Iphicles' presence.

IPHICLES (O.S.)

Help me lift this off.

Falafel crosses the kitchen floor and the SOUND of Iphicles struggling O.S. begins to change -- into the high-pitched SQUEAL of a pig. Falafel rounds the counter and sees:

FALAFEL'S POV

A bonafide pig lies trapped under the pot rack. It kicks, tries to break free.

BACK TO FALAFEL

His eyes light up; he begins to salivate.

FALAFEL

Here piggy, piggy, piggy....

WIDE - TO INCLUDE FALAFEL AND IPHICLES

There is, of course, no real pig to be found, only a very alarmed Iphicles because -- Falafel readies his meat cleaver and stalks forward.

IPHICLES

Falafel, what are you doing?

Falafel says nothing, but keeps approaching with lunatic obsession. Iphicles lies terrified and helpless as Falafel brings the cleaver down.

IPHICLES

moves his head out of the way at the last second, the blade embedding in the floor next to his right ear.

FALAFEL

tries to pull the cleaver out as Iphicles struggles to free himself from the pot rack.

50 INT. 'TREE' CAVERN - DAY

50

Hercules picks up the fruit and heads toward the exit. The door still descends, almost closed. He turns back to Callisto, who flails pitifully about.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

CALLISTO

Don't leave me! Please! I'm blind!

Hercules hesitates, then extends his hand to her.

HERCULES

Take my hand.

She reaches, grabs his hand, and SCREAMS. She spins him around, braces him in a headlock. Hercules throws himself backward, slamming her into a wall, knocking her off. As he races toward the exit, he turns back.

HERCULES

(continuing)

It didn't have to be this way.

With one last tortured scream, Callisto dives for Hercules, who rolls underneath the door just as it falls, trapping Callisto forever.

51 INT. LABYRINTH - DAY

51

Hercules follows the trail of fire to the exit.

52 INT. CASTLE HALLWAY - DUSK

52

The Hercules apparition leads Alcmene toward a high-rise balcony just ahead.

"HERCULES"

Come, Mother... almost there.

Alcmene follows in absolute submission.

53 EXT. LABYRINTH - DUSK

53

Hercules emerges from the labyrinth, looks up at the setting sun with alarm, then races home.

54 INT. CASTLE KITCHEN - DUSK

54

Iphicles is still trapped. Falafel finally manages to wrench the cleaver from the floor. As he raises it for a final blow, Iphicles' hand shoots out, free, and trips Falafel. Falafel flies backward, lets go of the cleaver.

IPHICLES

watches in horror as the cleaver spins in the air, then makes its descent toward him. Helpless, he closes his eyes

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

as the cleaver lands -- a centimeter from his left ear!
Regaining his composure, Iphicles frees himself, grabs the
cleaver and turns to Falafel, growling low in his throat.

IPHICLES

My turn.

He stalks forward... and Falafel backs away in terror.

55 EXT. HILLSIDE - DUSK

55

Hercules runs over the crest of a hill, pauses to see:

HERCULES' POV

Iphicles' castle just below.

BACK TO HERCULES

as he bolts off.

56 INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - DAY

56

Iolaus runs from Jason -- smacks into a dead end. Jason
laughs and charges forward -- just as Hercules bursts
through the door.

HERCULES

Jason, stop!

But Jason slashes; Iolaus ducks, then manuevers behind
Hercules, using him for protection. Jason charges and our
hero quickly falls to one knee and extends his arms. Jason
and Iolaus trip and fall flat on their backs.

JASON'S SWORD

goes flying. Hercules catches it and -- in two deft slashes
-- quarters the fruit, then tosses two pieces in the air.

JASON AND IOLAUS

try to sit up, but Hercules pins them back down, a hand on
each chest. They react, open-mouthed -- and the two pieces
of fruit drop straight in.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Slowly, clarity returns to their eyes. They look up at:

TOGETHER

Hercules?

They all react to a SCREAM from the nearby kitchen -- and
our hero runs in its direction.

57 INT. CASTLE KITCHEN - DAY

57

Iphicles stands above a cowering Falafel, about to bring the cleaver down. Hercules looks to a hanging tapestry, rips it down and tosses it over his brother like a net.

HERCULES

Sorry about this.

Apparently, this is the funniest thing Falafel's ever seen because he can't stop laughing -- until Hercules grabs him and hangs him on a meat hook.

HERCULES

(continuing)

You'll be safe here.

Iolaus and Jason now enter.

HERCULES

(continuing)

Where's mother?

IOLAUS

We haven't seen her.

Hercules tosses Iolaus a piece of fruit and points at Iphicles and Falafel.

HERCULES

Give them each a bite.

IOLAUS

Got it.

HERCULES

I'm going to find her.

And he bolts off.

58 EXT. BALCONY - DUSK

58

"Hercules" stands on the balcony ledge, beckoning Alcmene to join. She climbs onto the ledge. Looks down, sees:

ALCMENE'S POV

The ground is far below.

BACK TO SCENE

As "Hercules" beckons his mother to step forward.

"HERCULES"

One last step and we'll be together...
forever.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

Alcmene closes her eyes and smiles.

ALCMENE

I'm coming, Hercules. I love you.

Just as she's about to step off, she's stopped by a VOICE behind her.

HERCULES (O.S.)

I love you, too, Mother.

Alcmene opens her eyes, turns to see:

HER POV

Hercules -- in the flesh.

BACK TO SCENE

Alcmene is thoroughly confused. (NOTE: Hercules does not see Alcmene's apparition).

ALCMENE

What kind of trick is this?
(to apparition)
He looks like you.

Hercules follows Alcmene's blank gaze, then realizes she's hallucinating.

HERCULES

I'm right here, Mother.

ALCMENE

No, my son is dead.

HERCULES

I'm not.

He reaches out, touches her hand -- it's all the proof she needs. "Hercules" disappears... and she allows her real son to bring her down. Our hero enfolds her in his arms.

ALCMENE

Oh, Hercules, I let you down. I wasn't with you when you needed me.

HERCULES

You're always with me... in my thoughts, in my heart. Always.

ALCMENE

Does this mean I'm not going to the underworld?

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: 2

58

HERCULES

No, not yet. Here, I brought you something.

He pulls out the last slice of fruit.

ALCMENE

For me? You shouldn't have.

And as Alcmene takes the fruit, Iphicles, Jason, Iolaus, and Falafel -- all of them quite sane -- emerge from the doorway. Hercules turns to them as Alcmene finishes the fruit, blinking back to reality. She looks up at Herc, with:

ALCMENE

Hercules? Where have you been? I was worried sick.

HERCULES

I ran into somebody.

Iphicles puts an arm on his brother's shoulder.

IPHICLES

I'm sorry you missed your birthday.

JASON

The day's not over, yet.

FALAFEL

We still have cake.

IOLAUS

Yeah, and you've got lots of presents to open.

ALCMENE

Presents. That reminds me. There was a woman here, poor thing. She said she wanted to give you a gift.

Hercules looks around at the faces of his family and smiles, putting his arms around them.

HERCULES

She did. She made me appreciate my family... more than ever.

He leads his family inside as the sun sets over the castle.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR