



Heracles

Euripides

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CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY:

AMPHITRYON, husband of Alcmena, the mother of HERACLES

MEGARA, wife of HERACLES, daughter of Creon

LYCUS, unlawful King of Thebes

IRIS

MADNESS

MESSENGER

HERACLES, son of Zeus and Alcmena

THESEUS, King of Athens

CHORUS OF OLD MEN OF THEBES

Sons of HERACLES, guards, attendants

(SCENE:-Before the palace of HERACLES at Thebes. Nearby stands the altar of Zeus, on the steps of which are now seated AMPHITRYON, MEGARA and her sons by HERACLES. They are seeking refuge at the altar.)

AMPHITRYON: WHAT mortal hath not heard of him who shared a wife with Zeus, Amphitryon of Argos, whom on a day Alcaeus, son of Perseus begat, Amphitryon the father of Heracles? He it was dwelt here in Thebes, where from the sowing of the dragon's teeth grew up a crop of earth-born giants; for of these Ares saved a scanty band, and their children's children people the city of Cadmus. Hence sprung Creon, son of Menoeceus, king of this land; and Creon became the father of this lady Megara, whom once all Cadmus' race escorted with the glad music of lutes at her wedding, in the day that Heracles, illustrious chief, led her to my halls. Now he, my son, left Thebes where I was settled, left his wife Megara and her kin, eager to make his home in Argolis, in that walled town which the Cyclopes built, whence I am exiled for the slaying of Electryon; so he, wishing to lighten my affliction and to find a home in his own land, did offer Eurystheus a mighty price for my recall, even to free the world of savage monsters, whether it was that Hera goaded him to submit to this, or that fate was leagued against him. Divers are the toils he hath accomplished, and last of all hath he passed through the mouth of Taenarus into the halls of Hades to drag to the light that hound with bodies three, and thence is he never returned. Now there is an ancient legend amongst the race of Cadmus, that one Lycus in days