

Film: Hercules (Disney 1997)

Act 1: The Setup

Hercules is a teenager living in Greece, cursed with unnatural strength. Through accident, he becomes a town menace when he destroys the main square of his village. He is despised, and outcast by the villagers, and Hercules feels that he belongs somewhere else. His parents tell him that he is adopted, and Hercules sets off. Since he was found with the symbol of Zeus, he goes to the Temple of Zeus. There Zeus confesses that he is his son, deprived of his immortality, and that he can gain it back by doing an amazing deed. Hercules reunites with a childhood friend, Pegasus, and they travel to find a trainer for Hercules, Phil. Phil says that he will train him, and Hercules is off to become a mighty hero.

Act 2: The Confrontation

Hercules is finally trained and ready to be a hero. He attempts to rescue a woman named Meg from danger, but she is not taken by his hero act. We find out she is an accomplice of Hades, and when he sees Hercules has returned, he unleashes many monsters on him. Through a montage, Hercules becomes more and more popular in Greece, as he fights more and more monsters, to the dismay of Hades. When Zeus tells Hercules that even these victories cannot reinstate him to his God status, Hercules becomes depressed. Meg is starting to fall in love with Hercules, and Hades notices this. On the night before he releases five titans onto the Earth and Mount Olympus, he tricks Hercules into giving up his strength, for Meg's life. Hades releases the Titans to cause havoc and to conquer Zeus and the other Gods. He sends a cyclops after Hercules. Hercules is unwilling to fight, until Phil and Meg encourage him. While defeating the Cyclops, Meg saves Hercules from a falling Pillar, getting crushed herself. This gives back Hercules his strength, and he defeats the Titans and Hades. When he returns though, Meg is dead.

Act 3: The Resolution

Hercules descends into the Underworld to retrieve Meg's soul. He makes a deal with Hades to give his life for hers, if he is able to retrieve her soul in time. Hercules nearly dies saving Meg's soul, and this transforms him into a God. He emerges from the Underworld, saves Meg's life, and returns to Mount Olympus, able to embrace his mother and father. He declares that he would rather spend a mortal life with Meg, than an immortal life without her, and relinquishes his immortality. They return to Earth, and spend the rest of their lives happy, and together.

The Hero's Journey:

The Ordinary World:

Hercules lives in Greece, with his adopted mother and father, in the times of ancient Greece.

The Call to Adventure:

Hercules accidentally destroys his town (due to his unnatural strength), by knocking a pillar over, and the entire town makes fun of him. He feels like a misfit. And then he leaves his hometown, looking for where he belongs.

The Refusal of the Call:

Hercules feels hopeless, like he is unable to do it. He gets lost during his travels, until he comes upon a temple, built for the Greek God Zeus.

The Meeting with the Mentor:

In Hercules, both Zeus, his father, and his trainer Phil, are introduced as a mentor. Zeus tells the audience how Hercules is to become a God again, and also in what ways he can do it. He sends Hercules to Phil, a trainer of God, who agrees to train him.

Crossing the Threshold (Accepting the Call):

Hercules accepts Phil's offer to train him, and leaves his doubts behind him.

Tests, Allies and Enemies:

In Hercules, Hercules trains with Phil, getting stronger, and overcomes the obstacles and monsters that Hades, the villain, puts in front of him. Hercules saves a woman, Meg, from being kidnapped (though she is Hades' accomplice), and falls into many traps that Hades sets for him, but every time Hercules emerges victorious.

The Approach to the In-Most Cave:

In Hercules, Hercules becomes very self-absorbed in his new success, and sends Phil away. Hades, realizing that Meg is a weakness to Hercules, kidnaps her, and tells Hercules to give up his strength in return for her, with a promise of her society. Hercules gives in to his demands. Hades releases five titans on the earth, and Mount Olympus so he can be in a position of ultimate power.

The Ordeal:

Hercules attempts to fight back against the titans. The titans, and Hades capture all of the Gods on Mount Olympus. Phil returns, and encourages Hercules to fight against the titans, and Meg is crushed by a pillar when she gets caught in the cross fire. Hercules, trying to save her, gets his strength back, and returns to Mount Olympus, and defeats the Titans and Hades.

The Reward:

Hercules has defeated the Titans, but Hades is still there and causing mischief.

The Road Back:

Hercules returns to Meg, and finds she is dead. He is determined to save her.

The Resurrection:

The resurrection in Hercules is when Hercules attempts to save Meg's soul in the underworld as she dies. He makes a bet with Hades, to take his soul, instead, if he can get her soul out of hell. Hades agrees. After swimming through an ocean of death, Hercules emerges victorious, and he is now a God. He goes to Mount Olympus, embraces his parents, and finds where he believed he belongs. He decides to give up his immortality to spend a life with Meg.

Return with the Elixir:

In Hercules, Hercules returns to his hometown, with knowledge, a new love, and a new respect for his life as a mortal. He also now knows where he derives from, and where he belongs.