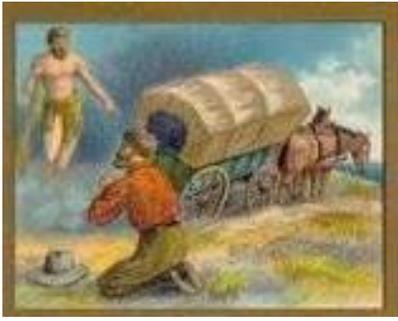


AESOP'S FABLE: Hercules and the Wagoner

A Play Written by Connie Frank



Narrator on the Greek Hero Heracles (Hercules): Hercules (known in Greek mythology as Heracles or Herakles) is one of the best-known heroes in ancient mythology. His life was not easy—he endured many trials and completed many daunting tasks—but the Mount Olympus. Hercules was not a god, but was born a mortal, although like many mythic heroes, he had a complicated family tree. According to legend, his father was Zeus, Ruler of all the Greek gods on Mount Olympus and all the mortals on earth, and his mother was Princess Alcmene, the granddaughter of the hero Perseus. Then, after Hercules was born,

Queen Hera sent two snakes to kill him in his crib. The infant Hercules was unusually strong and fearless, however, and he strangled the snakes before they could strangle him.

Characters:	
	Narrator:
	Greek Farmer:
	Hercules:
Script:	
Narrator:	The farmer grows olive trees and is driving his wagon along a bumpy country road with deep holes after a heavy rain steeping mud in the holes. The olive tree has been considered sacred by Greeks for thousands of years. In Greek mythology, it was the sacred tree of the goddess Athena and Athens. Olive cultivation predates 300 B.C. and is believed to have begun in Syria. The growing of olives spread rapidly into both ancient Rome and Greece. By 900 B.C., Homer referenced not only olives but olive oil as one the essential parts of the then modern culture. The poor horses leading the farmer's wagon can hardly drag the load through the deep mud, and at last come to a standstill when one of the wheels sank to the hub in a rut.
Greek Farmer:	Ho boys! Pull, boys! You can do it!
Narrator:	The farmer is mad. He pushes his horses, Cha, and Mora, and the horses are straining, trying hard to grasp the ground, but the mud is slippery.
Greek Farmer:	(Sweating in the heat): C'mon boys! You can do it. Let's go!
Narrator:	The farmer climbed down from his seat and stood beside the wagon looking at it but without making the least effort to get it out of the rut. All he did was to curse his bad luck.
Greek Farmer:	This is not fair! I have worked all day to try to get my olive oil to market and now this!
Narrator:	The farmer threw his folded fist in the air and threatened the gods in the sky.
Greek Farmer:	This is all your fault! You have been against me since I left my home today. How could you be so cruel!
Narrator:	The skies grew dark, and thunder boomed through the air, scaring the poor horses that were still straining to pull the wagon out of the holes.
Greek Farmer:	Hercules! You need to make them stop! The gods are cruel today, and I need your help!
Hercules:	What is going on? Why are you angry with the gods?
Narrator:	Hercules really had decided to appear for the farmer. He had a scowl on his face, and he seemed angry.
Hercules:	(Walking up to the wagon and patting the horses): Put your shoulder to the wheel, man, and urge on your horses. What do you think you are doing?
Greek Farmer:	(His mouth gaps open): I don't understand! You are here! Get my wagon out of the mud!
Hercules:	Do you think you can move the wagon by simply looking at it and whining about it?
Narrator:	(Shaking his head) But the wagon is heavy, and I need strength to help me move it! I cannot do this!

Narrator:	Hercules will not help unless you make some effort to help yourself.
Greek Farmer:	No! I cannot do it! Only you can move the wagon.
Hercules:	(Looking fierce and folding his arms): How do you know you cannot move it if you will not even try?
Narrator:	Hercules shook his head and walked on down the road. When the farmer put his shoulder to the wheel and tugged on the horses, the wagon moved easily enough. The farmer was soon riding in great content and with a good lesson learned.
Narrator:	The farmer was very dependent on the idea that Hercules would be his salvation and help the farmer out of his predicament. It was a shame that the farmer did not trust himself to solve the problem. The farmer had expected some higher power to take care of him. In truth, the farmer had every tool he needed to resolve his problem, and once he realizes that he can do more than he thought he could, he has become a better man.

There are two morals for the story is:

*"Self-help is the best help."
 "Heaven helps those who help themselves."*