

Odyssey of the Apartment
(2nd draft)

Opening Titles: Tight on a rocky, stormy shoreline. The titles appear hewn in stone. Flash of lightning, thunder; heroic theme music.

Hercules Amongst The North Americans

A wave rises up and washes away one title to reveal the next. At end of title sequence, camera rises up from water's edge to reveal a dark, wet forest; crumbled remains of a building.

Overlay: "Somewhere on the continent of North America,
five and a half centuries after the Fall of Thebes"

Truck into forest. Dim signs of habitation appear...a campfire. Camera closes in to reveal Hercules sitting on a log, warming his hands by the fire; his lion's pelt is draped about him to guard against the cold and the wet. A crude tent is set up to one side. The remains of some sort of unidentifiable animal are skewered on a spit over the campfire.

Several other makeshift camps are visible nearby inhabited by ragged, miserable folk.

Suddenly, a bolt of lightening and a clap of thunder. Hercules looks up with a start. At the edge of the trees appears a helmeted warrior on horseback. Then a second; and a third! Hercules jumps to his feet and sounds the alarm.

Hercules

"Arm yourself, men! We are besieged!"

[Battle Music]

With a bloodthirsty yell, the warriors attack, some on horseback, others on foot. In one seamless move Hercules draws his sword and swipes an assailant off of his steed. A bloody battle ensues (video cuts to match music). The peasants give little resistance as they are quickly routed; their tents torn asunder, their meager belongings trounced into the mud. Meanwhile, Hercules throws off two attackers with a mighty heave. He looks about and sees that all is lost as his encampment is destroyed and his fellows scatter to escape.

[Cut to]: Two warriors on horseback. From their helmets and uniforms we can see they are metropolitan police.

Police Officer #1

“Goddamned filthy homeless are takin’ over the parks!”

[Cut to]: Hercules, swinging a flaming torch, keeps several officers at bay.

Police Officer #2

“And they’re gettin’ a lot more ballsy, if you ask me!”

With a yell they ride off screen to join in the battle.

[Fade to]: Edge of park; Hercules and a remnant of squatters scatter out of the park, tripping and falling in their confusion. Battle sounds continue in the background. Hercules dashes into a dark alley, hugging the wall as he waits for the police to pass. The sound of sirens and police cars fades. Dejected, Hercules turns and walks away. He walks past a homeless beggar with a cane. In actuality, the man is Thelonius, the blind soothsayer poet. Thelonius addresses the camera.

Thelonius
“Hercules, without a home
No palace strong has he.
And as he wanders through the land
He wonders, wonders he:
‘A simple place with warming fire,
So I won’t have to beg.’
But lo, the dwellings are far and few
And cost an arm and leg.”

Thelonius gestures on this last line to accent the point. A passerby tosses a coin into his open palm.

[Cut to]: Overhead shot of city. Hercules walks off in the distance; the blind soothsayer stands at the wall; pockets the coin. Low clouds pass by.

[Fade to]: City street, morning. Hercules is ambling along. He looks up and notices a sign.

[Cut to]: Shot of sign, Hercules’ POV:

ALL CITY REAL ESTATE
-APARTMENTS TO LET-

[Cut to]: Interior office of apartment broker. Hercules walks in, holding the sign.

Hercules
(gesturing to the sign)
“Wouldst thou ‘let’ me have an apartment?”

A scruffy lady behind the glass partition eyes Hercules suspiciously.

Lady
(in a smoker's voice)

“I’ll ‘let’ you fill out this application. (*hack*)
You got a job?”

Hercules
(taking application)

“A job? (*chortles*) I’ve had *many* labours, my good woman. Labours of heroism and might. No doubt you’ve heard how in a single day I cleaned the thousand stalls of the Augean stable.

(starting to ramble)

And then, of course, there was the taking of the girdle of Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons.
Afterward, I roamed in search of...”

Lady
(not impressed)

“Hmm... can’t hold down a job, eh?
(she scribbles something)

Listen, just sit over there and fill out the form.”

Hercules takes a seat between two young women who are working on their applications. He’s filled with newfound confidence.

Hercules
(to the two ladies)

“Once I am settled I will be in need of handmaidens.
(suggestively)

And perhaps if one pleases me in particular....”

Disgusted, the two women get up from their seats and leave.

Young lady
(on the way out)

“Pig!”

Hercules
(perplexed)

“By Zeus! Forgive me...er, certainly
both of you could please me.”

Holding his pencil clumsily, he returns to his application. Writing his name with some difficulty, he notices an application left behind by one of the young ladies. He grabs it, scratches over the name and heads up to the desk clerk.

[Fade to]: Interior, upscale office; the review board of a condominium. Several men and women dressed in suits are sitting on one side of a long table. A secretary addresses the group.

Secretary
(holding the door)

“ ‘ALL CITY’ sent over this next gentleman. Personally, I
don’t think he’s for us but, well, he’s quite
insistent...claims some sort of royal lineage.”

Chief Review Officer

“Well, then, let’s get on with it. Show him in.”

The secretary opens the office door. Hercules strides in purposefully, bedecked in his finest lion pelt. He stands before the board, holding a noble stance.

Chief Review Officer

“Er... uh... we understand you’re interested

in one of our units.”

Hercules

“Indeed. A room facing east if you please...that
I may greet Apollo each morning.”

Chief Review Officer

“Indeed. ”

(looking at application)

“It says here you’re a graphic designer.
What firms have you worked for?”

Hercules

(trying to keep it together)

“Er,...uh... firms?”

(pauses, then leans forward, displaying a bicep)

“Ha. Feel that. That’s firm.”

Female Officer

(indicating the lion pelt)

“Do you always dress in this manner?”

Third Officer

(quietly, to his neighbor)

“Well, it is *fur* I suppose.”

Several review officers titter cruelly. Hercules’ expression turns sour, but he holds his ground.

Female Officer

“We don’t allow pets.”

Third Officer

“Or late night parties.”

Chief Review Officer

“Do you have any children?”

Hercules brightens momentarily.

Hercules

“I have sired many offspring...

(chuckles)

... so many I have lost count .”

Chief Review Officer

“Uh...well, uh...we don't allow children here.”

Hercules

“You need not worry –

two I killed in fits of rage.

The rest -- I know not their whereabouts.”

[Cut to]: Exterior, condominium. After a beat, the doors burst open and Hercules emerges, fuming.

Hercules

“Cast out the son of Zeus, will they?!”

He pauses to glare back at the office tower.

Hercules

PAH!”

He reaches into his loincloth and produces several scraps of paper with addresses.

Hercules

“Fabled Hercules will take his rent elsewhere!”

[Fade to]: Exterior, city; daytime. Hercules is walking down a street lined with run down tenements. He holds up a piece of paper and recites the address.

Hercules

“One – Four – Five...”

Hercules stops in front of a tenement apartment.

Hercules

“This is the one.”

The apartment is a run down slum. Broken windows. Weeds grow out of a discarded refrigerator. Nearby, rubbish burns in a steel garbage can. Shady characters mill about. A light flickers overhead as Hercules approaches the front door. Seeing the dark hallway, Hercules grabs an ember from the burning rubbish. He enters the hall and carefully climbs the stairway holding out his makeshift “torch” to light the way. At the first landing he peers into a darkened apartment (the door is missing). In a flash, three large, vicious dog heads lunge at him, snarling.

Hercules

“Unholy Cerberus! Haven’t I done with you?”

Hercules swipes at the wild creature with his torch, not noticing that it’s actually three dogs chained to a radiator pipe. Climbing the stairs another flight he passes several open and half open doorways providing a sequence of appalling images...a wild-eyed man stands inside one door holding a hatchet in one hand and a wet chicken in the other; another doorway reveals some sort of illicit drug activity.

Hercules
(to himself)

“Surely I have entered the very halls of Hades.”

He comes to one apartment ; the door is ajar. On it has been painted an ominous black “X”.

Hercules
“Apartment #10. A-ha!”

Hercules pushes open the door. Peering in he discerns shapes...movement. A smile sweeps across his face.

Hercules
“Billicus, Andycles...and all the rest. My good fellows!”

Several disheveled squatters rustle slowly. A faulty hot plate smokes off in the corner. Rats scurry.

Hercules
“We held camp together in the park. It is I, Hercules!”

The homeless men grumble without recognition. Some curse half-heartedly. A police siren is heard in the background.

Hercules
(alertly)
“Hark!”

[Cut to]: Exterior, tenement. Three police cruisers pull up to the apartment and several officers jump out for their weekly drug raid.

[Cut back to]: Hercules amidst the squatters.

Hercules

“It is a trap! Come, we must make our escape!”

No one moves. One fellow retches. Hercules dashes towards the back window. Out on the fire escape he looks back and pleads once more.

Hercules

“Men! They approach!”

(sounds of officers scaling the stairs, making arrests)

(to himself)

“They have been bewitched!”

Tears well up in his eyes as he realizes he must abandon his friends. He jumps just as the police storm the room. An officer leans out the back window but all he hears is the fading pad of sandals against the pavement.

[Fade to]: Hercules plods along the city street, a beaten man. He happens to pass a man at a pay phone. Something stops him in his tracks. He leans towards the man on the phone to get a better listen.

Man

“Okay, let me get this straight. Two and a half blocks north, then one block east. The address is...

(phone voice)

...right...okay...

(phone voice)

Thank God you found it. I've been looking for this hardware store all afternoon.”

Hercules' expression awakens when he hears "God". The man hangs up and dashes off. Hercules watches him run off, then looks at the phone. He walks over carefully and picks up the receiver. He hears a dial tone. Looks at the receiver.

Hercules
(with hesitation)
"Greetings."

Listens. Hears the dial tone again. He looks at the dial buttons, squinting.

[Cut to]: Tight on dial buttons, centering on the "0" Operator button.

[Cut back to]: Tight on Hercules.

Hercules
(reading)
" 'O' ... 'P' ... 'E' ... "

Hercules' face turns ecstatic.

Hercules
" 'OLYMPUS' !!"

He presses '0'.

After a moment...

Operator
"Operator. Can I help you?"

Hercules
"Beloved gods! Indeed, your help I seek!
For I have traversed wild forests and scaled
gleaming towers in search of mortal shelter yet
none can be found."

Operator
"What city sir?"

Hercules

“Ah ha. No doubt you test me, for on high you
see all cities, all apartments.”

Operator

“Uh, sir, I need *something*. A name?...”

Hercules steps back from the phone booth, looks skyward.

Hercules
(with much grandiosity)

“HERCULES!”

The ground quakes, windows rattle.

Operator

“One moment, please.”

After a few seconds the operator returns.

Operator

“We have several listings, sir.”

[Cut to]: Medium shot of Hercules at pay phone.

Hercules

“Yes?....”

(garbled operator voice)

“...Hmmm...yes...”

(garbled operator voice)

“...mmm...”

[Fade to]: Tight on Hercules in relaxed repose. He lies on a comfortable dais. A microwave beeps. Hercules reaches over and pulls out a warm snack. As the camera pulls back we notice an odd mixture of creature comforts: to one side a make-shift torch burns dimly; on the other side a home entertainment center is set up with the television on. A gaudy leopard rug adds a warm touch. As the camera continues to pull back we notice several open boxes strewn about; boxes stacked high in the background. The camera continues to pull back through a window to the building's exterior.

The blind soothsayer steps into frame.

Thelonius

“Thus doth Hercules find a home
A place to rest, no more to roam.
And yet, were I a betting man I'd say
His will not be a lengthy stay.”

The camera pulls back to reveal a warehouse exterior with the business's name posted across the front:

“HERCULES MOVING & STORAGE”

Thelonius carefully ambles off, using his cane.

Finis