



THE 12 LABORS OF HERACLES

Having tried to kill Heracles ever since he was born, Hera induced a madness in him that made him kill his wife and children. Afterwards, Heracles went to the Oracle of Delphi to atone, where he prayed to the god Apollo for guidance. Heracles was told to serve Eurystheus, king of Mycenae, for ten years. During this time, he was sent to perform a series of difficult feats, called labours.

1. **The Nemean Lion:** Heracles was tasked with killing the invulnerable Nemean Lion. Using his strength, he strangled the beast and then used its own sharp claws to skin it, wearing its hide as a cloak.
2. **The Lernaean Hydra:** Heracles had to slay the multi-headed serpent, the Hydra. Each time he cut off a head, two more would grow back. He ultimately defeated it with the help of his nephew Iolaus, who cauterized the necks to prevent regeneration.
3. **The Ceryneian Hind:** Heracles was ordered to capture the sacred, golden-horned hind of Artemis without harming it. He chased it for a year before catching it alive.
4. **The Erymanthian Boar:** Heracles captured the giant boar that terrorized the region of Erymanthos, trapping it in a net and bringing it back alive.

5. **The Augean Stables:** Heracles cleaned the vast stables of King Augeas in a single day by rerouting rivers to wash out the filth.
6. **The Stymphalian Birds:** Heracles drove away or killed the man-eating, metal-feathered birds that plagued Lake Stymphalus using a rattle given by Athena and his bow.
7. **The Cretan Bull:** Heracles captured the wild, beastly bull that was ravaging Crete and brought it back to Greece.
8. **The Mares of Diomedes:** Heracles tamed or captured the man-eating mares owned by the Thracian king Diomedes by feeding them their master.
9. **The Girdle of Hippolyta:** Heracles was sent to retrieve the girdle of the Amazon queen Hippolyta. Initially peaceful, the situation turned hostile, and he fought his way to take it.
10. **The Cattle of Geryon:** Heracles traveled to the far west to fetch the cattle of the giant Geryon, defeating him and his guardian dog, Orthus, along the way.
11. **The Apples of the Hesperides:** Heracles was tasked with retrieving the golden apples guarded by the Hesperides and a dragon. He either tricked, persuaded, or fought to obtain them.
12. **The Capture of Cerberus:** Heracles descended into the Underworld and captured Cerberus, the three-headed dog, without weapons, and brought him to the surface, completing his final labor.

