



The Children of Herakles (Greek Tragedy in New Translations)

Euripides

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One of the shortest plays in Greek drama, *The Children of Herakles* offers enough action for two or three plays of normal length. But this very richness and complexity have made the play elusive, subject to dismissive readings, and extraordinarily difficult to translate; in consequence, it has suffered from neglect over the ages. This vibrant new translation makes clear that *The Children of Herakles* is actually a wonderfully well-crafted work of art, a play offering a wealth of rewards to the modern reader.

It is a play about war and the effects of war within the state. Herakles, the legendary hero cursed from birth, was never permitted a triumphant homecoming. Here, his descendants continue the effort to return home, seeking asylum from the persecution of the king who had imposed on Herakles the famous twelve labors. While it pursues concepts of deep moral grandeur, it ends with a denouement of astonishing physical and ethical brutality, and affords Euripides a severe comment on what he believed was the decline of the Athenian character.

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