

A tale for all ages



Hercules & Rosa Velt

~ A Fable in Verse ~

SMSMITH

The wisdom of the wise and
the experience of the ages
is preserved into perpetuity
by a nation's proverbs, fables,
folk sayings and quotations.

~ William Feather ~

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A fable in verse about a brash, young fly  
and a shrewd, old spider.

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Hercules - Bluebottle Fly ~ Common Blow Fly  
(*Calliphora vomitoria*)

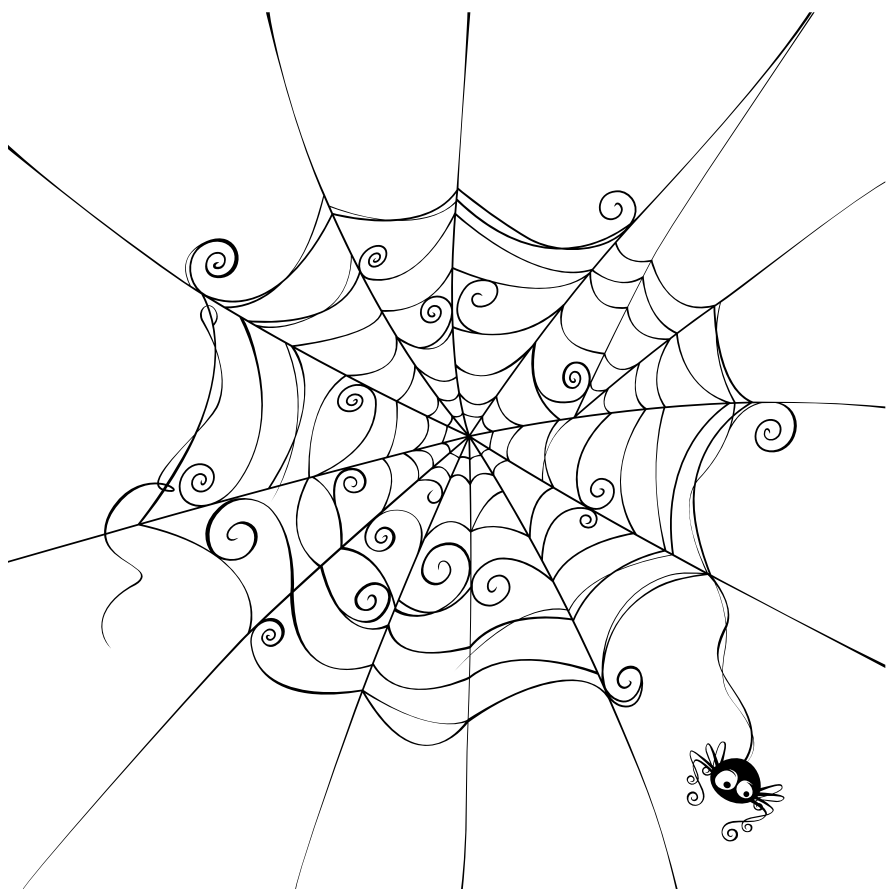
Rosa Velt - Marbled Orb Weaver  
(*Araneus marmoreus*)

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### **Disclaimer**

Any resemblance to a living child, teenager,  
or mid-life crisis is purely coincidental  
(though not unexpected).

SMS



To  
my nibblings  
& their kids

# Hercules & Rosa Velt

~ A Fable in Verse ~

Come listen to this tale (almost of woe)  
Of a young fly's misadventure—just a short  
time ago.

It happened one evening on a farm called  
*Yonder Bluff*,  
When some bluebottle flies spied the oddest,  
eight-legged puff!  
"Why, it's sure not a flyer!" one cried, "that  
shows plain enough;  
But what does it do? just sit on its duff?  
And what, in dithers, is that weird, stringy  
stuff?"

"Well, I'll tell you, you young'uns," growled a  
grouchy old fly,  
"That you'd best keep your distance and be  
listening why;  
For that *thing* is a spider and what it's  
guessing *you'll* try  
Is to fly through those strings—and this is no  
lie—  
There is nothing so sticky in this whole tricky  
sky."

Well, the spider was named Rosa and she heard  
all they said,  
Yet she smiled and smiled as she spun out  
more thread,  
Because several young flies had gone right on  
ahead  
Swooping and goofing in the trees near her  
web, instead  
Of being warned and heading straight home to  
bed.



And sure enough, close by in those trees  
Zoomed a brash, young fly who loved buzzing  
the breeze.

All plump and cheery from dining on cheese,  
He was silly and sassy and a terrible tease,  
Except when he claimed, "I am named,  
Hercules."

Now this Herc often soared on his see-through,  
thin wings,  
Singing over and over, "My grandpas were  
kings. My grandpas were kings."  
Though everyone scoffed, "Pooh-hooey, you're  
just a common blowfly—same as we—with  
no royal ties nor any such strings."  
But, in fairness to Herc—from where a fly  
springs  
Can be highly surprising; that's the nature of  
things.

What's more, Herc was the kind who *loved* the  
word ME,  
And he often declared, "Rules are wrong what-  
ever they be";  
Which alarmed the old flies who feared they'd  
soon see  
Some shocking end to his flying so free.  
"Why can't he just listen?" they'd sadly sigh  
and agree.

But Herc was too clever to ever give ear  
To crazy, strange tales—of creeping crawlers to  
fear?!  
"Why must you persist," the old flies exclaimed,  
"in flying so near  
All these bad things in life that get worse every  
year?"  
"How silly," Herc snorted. "Your stories are too  
unbelievably queer."

"Not so!" cried the old ones. "What we tell you  
is true,  
But like many a youngster, you haven't a clue."  
"A youngster!" Herc howled. "Why I have more  
wing-time than thousands—times two."  
And so he disputed till his face turned bluer  
than blue;  
Till he rudely flew off, scoffing, "Pooh-pooh, I  
say, to all of you."

With that the old flies headed home, shedding  
tears of shimmering green,  
Distressed for Herc's future by all they'd heard  
and seen.  
But what could they do with this silly winged-  
bean  
Always mocking and squawking and making a  
scene?  
So set on himself; so handsome; so keen.

For the thing Herc loved most was to jet  
around  
With his thoughts revved up and his wings  
unwound.  
"I'll do what I please in these trees," he scowled  
and frowned,  
"'Cause I'll never give up this great fun I've  
found  
Doing flips and dips and these tricks that  
astound."

So Herc stayed and disobeyed to watch Rosa  
add line upon line  
To that thing he'd been told was of sticky  
design;  
Till at last he exclaimed, "Why, that spider  
never sticks! I declare—it's a sign.  
I'll try this stunning new trick of mine  
And show these spineless flyers, you can come  
out just fine."

"Hey, watch me," he cried, and took off full  
pelt,  
Straight like a shot to where Rosa now dwelt  
Where aghast! he stuck fast! and instantly felt  
His eyes and wings and everything melt  
To a quaking fear of the thrilled Rosa Velt.

In shivering shock, he shook his bruise-hued  
bean,  
But he only stuck tighter in the tough, tacky  
screen,  
Moaning and groaning with little sobs  
in-between.  
"Oh why, in blazes, hadn't those old flies seen  
To clearing this farm of these crawlers and then  
keeping it clean?"

He just had to bear up if he hoped to escape  
this mess,

Though slim-to-no chance was one terrible  
guess.

He suddenly felt great need to confess,  
But every last fly he'd been trying to impress  
Had managed to vanish in two seconds or less.

Herc thought, "I've just gotta get calm and  
figure some way  
To keep my nice body intact and okay.  
If that creepy crawler would just please, *please*  
delay;  
Give me time to think and weigh  
My means of escape and ... maybe to pray."

But Mrs. Velt was coming fast  
As all Herc's life before him passed.  
Could he, this cheeky pest who sassed,  
Surprise the old spinner and leave *her* aghast  
With a back-flip to freedom—like some  
jumping gymnast?

Herc tried with his might, but all he could raise  
Were his pleading thoughts with his imploring  
gaze.

The old ones would have hovered in marvelled  
amaze

To hear Herc confess, "For the rest of my days  
If please there are more—I'll be mending my  
ways."

But Rosa had arrived and was hanging on high,  
Staring in earnest with a terrible eye.  
Poor Herc thought, at first, he would simply die  
Of the fright; but instead he just swung there,  
    high and dry,  
For there was no hint of help in the whole  
    blazing sky.

Yet with desperate hope, he lay stiff as a peg  
Despite the gruesome, gooey drool of that  
    grinning, spindly egg,  
And several nasty pokes from her long,  
    twiggish leg.  
Knowing this could hurt worse than the worst  
    swatters-plague,  
Frantic Hercules decided to beg.



"Please listen, Ms. Spider, before  
You come any closer or  
Do something more  
'Cause I'm covered in bug poison, inside and  
all o'er,  
And poison's not something a smart bug  
should ignore!"

Well, Rosa grinned wider at Herc's frenzied  
alarm,  
Because everyone knew—poisons weren't  
allowed on this organic-type farm.  
Moreover she mused, *This could be fun! Why it  
couldn't do any harm.*  
So pretending to clean her *poisoned* arm  
She spoke to Herc with a spidery charm.

"Why, my poor, little fly—is this poison from  
something you ate?  
Does your tummy feel sick? Do your legs seem  
all stiff? Do your eyes bug out straight?  
Or is this some fib—to trick an old spider so  
she'll sit back and wait?  
Well, my wily young fly—you should know—I  
just hate  
How you flyers try lies, when it's quite wrong  
and TOO late."

"Oh, please," (Herc pled in his head), "please  
give me time  
To find a dry cable of cobweb to climb.  
I've just gotta be saved! 'Twould be such crime  
Now that I'm ... [sob, sob] I'm  
Seeing and believing, so PLEASE, just this one  
time!"

But Rosa wheezed on, "Now just so you're cozy  
and don't catch a chill,  
I'll wrap you up snugly in my fine, silken frill,  
For it keeps meals more tidy—less likely to  
spill."

With that Herc's voice went from pleading to  
shrill,  
And he felt himself feeling quite desperately ill.

Still he tried every reason under the sun  
To talk his way out of what he had done.  
But the marbled orb weaver just laughed and  
made fun,  
Till frightfully soon it was clear who had won,  
For in the spinning of yarns, Herc was sadly  
out-spun.

He wasn't nearly as smart nor as empty of fear  
As he'd always believed and taken pains to  
appear.

All those things he'd been told? that he'd  
scorned with a sneer?

Were not at all queer now he was here  
Cocooned by this thing that had gone round to  
his rear!

*But just* as Herc felt a wrenching tug on his  
wing

The web was *ker-whammed* into the wildest  
swing

Flinging Rosa way up, though still attached by  
her string;

And then Herc witnessed the most amazing  
thing

That had never before happened from that  
farm's first spring!

A horsefly so huge he looked like a jet  
Had somehow knocked himself cold and fallen  
    smack to Rosa's net!  
So limp was he laid that without fuss or fret,  
He was trussed up in threads, all snugly set,  
While Herc jiggled close by in a panicky sweat.

Then Rosa glared from this one to that  
So Herc squeezed himself skinny-ish by press-  
    ing out flat.  
Soon Rosa strolled over on the loose-spiralled  
    mat  
And sneered while she peered through a grey,  
    gauzy slat,  
"I've caught something far better than a blue-  
    bottle brat."

And in a manner so rough, it was incredibly  
rude,  
Rosa yanked up the silk that swathed Herc as  
food;  
And since Herc's tiny hairs stayed glued  
To the strings, he unspun from a mummy to  
being a nude,  
With little "ouch" spots, like he'd been measles-  
tattooed.

Then, with one final kick at Herc's last sticky  
knee,  
Rosa sent her fly spinning (so gratefully) free  
As she snorted and said, "You're the silliest twit  
I ever did see,  
So I'll bet you ten horseflies—and I'll throw in  
a bee—  
That again by tomorrow, you'll be stuck here  
with me."

Well, that was plain wrong, humbled Herc now  
knew,  
Because never again with a mocking pooh-  
pooh  
Would he run all riot with his head all askew.  
"Yes, some rules are right; what they taught  
proved so true,"  
Herc confessed with a sigh (and a little cry) as  
he limped home to his bedtime, now long  
overdue.

And to this very day, Herc sings in a far  
different key,  
For he's the luckiest fly that ever flew free.

**THE END**



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Appearances are often deceiving.

~ Aesop ~

We often give our enemies the means  
for our own destruction.

~ Aesop ~

Better be wise by the misfortunes of others  
than by your own.

~ Aesop ~

