

## ***Syracuse: Historical-Action-Drama***

213 B.C., Epipola. ARCHIMEDES, the reclusive dreamer ecstatically streaks naked through the village past disdainful rustics having solved a vexing abstract problem in the bath. Pious Roman tribune MARCUS MARCELLUS liberates Casilinum from its Carthaginian occupiers capturing HIPPOCRATES, brother of HIERA, the wise queen of Syracuse, but his freedman EPICYDES flees. Pompous general FABIUS PICTOR reveals Hippocrates's plan for a treaty with Carthage.

Risking all for Rome's security, Marcus consents to Fabius's illegal wife to infiltrate Syracuse in the guise of traders with THEMISTOCLES his erudite freedman to eliminate Carthaginian spies; reconnoiter defenses, then, lead a naval invasion. Epicydes informs Hieria who, fearing war, asks Archimedes to construct new defences for the city, despite his vow to never again serve Syracuse.

Having somberly recalled his family's death, carefree children at play spur him to act. Surveying the affluent independent metropolis, Marcus's religious sensibilities are offended by innovations like the Pantheon Clock that mechanically predicts religious festivals. Archimedes' defences also fail to impress him. To continue their ruse, he and Themistocles present themselves before Hieria.

Steadfast captain HERON watches over their petition, but, spying on the proceedings is Hieria's unworldly grandson HIERONYMUS and Epicydes who sees Marcus. He reveals to Hieronymus that Marcus took his uncle hostage; that Hippocrates sought an accord with Carthage because he feared Syracuse could not defeat a Roman invasion, and, that a war with Rome is now inevitable.

The terrified youth implores Epicydes to tell Hieria. Epicydes agrees; promises to serve him as he did his uncle should Syracuse's safety be in his inexperienced hands. Heron calls out Marcus to reveal his true identity. Undaunted, Marcus disarms a soldier; wounds Epicydes; flees Syracuse with Themistocles. Hearing the ominous news, Archimedes promises his defences will be ready.

Romans invade but Archimedes' war machines force Marcus into a humiliating retreat. Syracuse rejoices. Bitter, Epicydes poisons Hieria, who dies, and Hieronymus inadvertently. Not knowing Epicydes murdered Hieria, Hieronymus demands he proves his loyalty by brokering a treaty with Carthage for his uncle's return. He jails Heron, and exiles Archimedes for opposing any alliance.

Fabius is cast out of the Senate. Marcus is stripped of citizenship and banished. About to commit suicide, he finds salvation in a miniature Pantheon Clock. Detailing his intrepid strategy to attack Syracuse during its festival of Artemis, he inspires Fabius, keen to outdo a forebear who defeated Syracuse, to solicit the Senate for support. Marcus and Themistocles develop new war machines.

212 B.C., Festivities underway: to thwart Syracuse's loss of liberty, Archimedes rescues Heron. Romans attack: Marcus by land; Fabius by sea. Epicydes reveals his true nature – a revengeful Carthaginian general. In combat, Marcus kills him; wounds Heron. Archimedes is slain by a riled Roman. Syracuse is beaten; a Carthaginian invasion stopped. Archimedes is cremated. In awe of his genius, Marcus asks Themistocles to translate his works and takes his contrivances to Rome.