

MEDEA
DIRECTOR'S COPY - M.Fleishman

PROLOGUE

Two children building sandcastles on the beach. They continue their castle oblivious of anything happening around them.

The nurse brings in a sack. She buries this in the sand. She is in a hurry; nervous that she will be caught.

Medea: Listen to my story children.

There once was a wicked king called Pelias.

He stole the crown from his brother Aeson.

He set a fire which burnt down the palace killing Aeson and all his family.

Aeson had a son who was two years old at the time of the fire.

A palace servant saved him from the fire and took him to live with the Centaurs

high up in the mountains. The Centaurs were half horse and half human.

Many years passed and Pelias heard an oracle that told him to beware of the man with the one shoe. It did not take long for the oracle to be confirmed. Aeson's

son, now a grown man, came down from the mountains to claim the kingdom

from his uncle. He was tall and handsome. He soared up from ground

almost touching the sky. His hair was golden and he smelt like the sea. He

was as strong as a lion. It was winter and the river Anaurus was in full flood. As

he crossed the river his foot was caught in the mud and when he tried to pull it

out his one shoe remained embedded in the riverbank. A short time later he

came before king Pelias and demanded that Pelias hand over the crown.

When Pelias saw the man with the one shoe standing before him he was afraid.

He pretended to welcome his brother's son, saying that he would be prepared

to hand over the crown if his nephew were to sail to the land of the Colchians

across the sea and bring back the Golden Fleece. Aeson's son accepted the

task and set sail for Colchis in ship called Argo with a crew of the finest

warriors in the land. He was resolved to do anything necessary to bring back

the fleece, anything at all, to become king.

Lights fade to black.

Whispering

Medea stands in the centre of the space. The chorus move behind her in various images of whispering; of laughing; of the conclusion of secret deals; of the dressing of a bride; of the ushering away of children. She is aware of them but doesn't know what they mean.

SCENE ONE

Creon: *(From off)* Medea!

The nurse enters. She goes up to Medea who is still standing in the centre of the space.

Nurse: Beware the king!

Soldier: Creon! King of Corinth!

Creon: Medea! Murderous child of Aeetes,
Why have you not removed yourself from my domains?
It was decreed you should be gone.
Go! You are banished.

Medea: What?

Creon: Banished!

Medea: Why?

Creon: Keep away! Do not speak a word.
Don't look at me. Sooner or later you must learn
To tolerate imperial commands.

Medea: Me? What have I done?
What crime, what act of immorality,
Brings sentence of exile as punishment?

Creon: You threaten the safety of my people.

Medea: That is not true?

Creon: Your father, Aeetes, king of Colchis,
seeks revenge.

Medea: It has been a long time.

Creon: No!

Medea: Why?

Creon: Keep still! Look away!

Medea: Why?

Creon: I fear you.#

You are the face I see in my dreams,
In the mirror, a dark shadow.

Medea: No!

Creon: Look away!

Medea: Once before I begged for mercy
at your knees. Stripped; bare; on the run.
A stranger with a quivering mate,
taken in with open arms.
I am one of you now. Me.
I have ripped the tongue from my mouth
and lost it. I have washed the sweat from
my body and hidden it.

Creon: Oh, go!

Medea: Why?

Creon: I will not justify myself to you.
I am good. I am noble.
I am benevolent.
I am not a man who brutally
wields royal power. When I see
misery, I am not proud;
I do not grind it underneath my heel.
My proof: Today I marry my daughter,
my only child, to a refugee, a banished man,
a beaten man, a man quaking with abject terror.

Medea: Who?

Nurse: Jason

Medea: Jason?

Nurse: Jason is marrying the king's daughter.

Medea: He is my husband.
He is my children's father.

Creon: Go! Get out. Drain this kingdom of your filth,
and, as you go, take all your poisons
and your lethal herbs.
Liberate my citizens from fear.

Medea: Give me back my husband.
I did not come here alone.

Creon: Go! You should have gone by now.

Creon turns to leave.

Medea: Creon!

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SCENE THREE

The inside of a club. Flashing lights and the heavy beat of dance music. The chorus dance and pose. Medea slowly and desperately dances with the chorus, individually, one at a time, sometimes with a pair. As she progresses from one to the next she becomes more wild, more desperate, more destructive in a strange sensual way. It seems as if she's unraveling, abandoning herself to fate in a self-destructive burst. It is as if she is becoming more and more drunk. The dance climaxes - Medea sees an image of her father, Aeetes, dressed in the golden fleece. She stops dancing, and moves towards it. Aeetes hits her and she collapses on the floor. The chorus move away, laughing.

SCENE FOUR

The club disappears. Medea is left in a heap in the centre of the space. The nurse moves towards her.

Nurse: Staen op, Medea! Get up and speak!
Ruk jouself reg. Don't let your enemies see their victory.

Medea: I am lost.

Nurse: Jy luister nie. Jy luister mos nie.
Van klein's af wou jy nie luister nie.
As jy my gefollow het,
Was ons al lankal in Colchis, by die huis.
And everything would be well. Ek het jou gesê.
Ek het jou gewarn. Bly weg van die strangers af.
Maar jy luister mos nie.

Medea: Go away. Leave me alone. Let me die.

Nurse: No use throwing a tantrum.
You shame us all down there in the dirt.
Staen op! Wat het ek vir jou geteach, heh?
Jy's 'n Colchian. Niemand lag vir 'n Colchian woman nie.
Niemand mock die bloed van my ancestors nie.
Vir jou pa, meisie. Jy jet jou country verloor.
Jy het jou pa verloor. Jy het jou broer verloor.
Moenie jouself verloor nie, meisie. Staen op!

Medea: I cannot.

The nurse goes to fetch a bowl of water and shows Medea her reflection in the water.

Nurse: Look! Take a good look.

Medea: This is not Medea!

Nurse: Ja!

SCENE FIVE

*The nurse washes Medea and dresses her in Colchian clothes.
A man is desperately riding a horse through the morning light. He beats it viciously, driving it on faster and faster, racing an unknown challenger on the river next to the path.
The rider jumps from his beaten horse and begins to call. # People come in from all sides picking up his call.
The king enters and the people push the messenger forward. He addresses the king.*

Chorus: Nkosi.

JOH.

Messenger: They are coming. They are coming.
The stranger are coming.

I have seen them – shooting out of the mist
in the first light of morning.

Shining like the sun; burning like fire;
Speeding like the cheetah on the plains.

Drum beat

Messenger: Forgive the interruption, Nkosi.
I am a simple shepherd.
I know little. I understand nothing.
I tend your flocks on the hills above the river.
And I am not drunk.

Coda: interruption -
needs
complete change of time
[tone?]

Drum beat

Ha.

Messenger:
They are coming. They are coming.
The strangers are coming.
I hadn't drunk anything.
I had just settled down for the day.
Out of the veil of mist I saw a ship,
like an arrow shooting through the sky.
When I saw them I jumped on my horse
and rode as fast as the wind,
till my one old horse lay dead on the sand.

Drum beat

Kya.

Messenger: Why have they come?
Why have the strangers come?
What will happen? What do they want?
I am scared. I am scared.
The blood of my fear flows from
between my teeth. I am scared.

Chorus: Nkosi yam!

Jason, leader of the Argonauts, arrives in Colchis. Helicopters overhead. Jason plants flag in ground. The messenger retreats. Aeetes advances to meet Jason accompanied by his warriors. They advance threateningly. Then Aeetes begins to laugh and the people take up the laughter on all sides. There is a dance of welcome. Medea advances towards Jason with a food offering. As their eyes meet, she falls passionately in love. The dance begins again and sweeps Jason up and carries him to where Aeetes awaits. Jason and Aeetes sit before a chess board. Medea who has been hurriedly dressed by her attendants, rushes in and sits by her father's side. The two men play a game, interpreted by Medea.

Medea: *(She throws - breath)*

My father welcomes you to Colchis. *(sand)*

We thank him for his kindness.

My father wishes to know why you have come here.

(he is preoccupied with her. Aeetes clicks fingers)

We come in peace. *(hand on head and ground)*

Yes?

We have been sent by a cruel vicious king.

Go on.

We have been sent on a dangerous mission.

We come as friends. *(No movement/sand)*

What is it you want?

We are willing to help subdue your enemies.

What is it you want?

We don't want to take it we want you to give it to us.

What is it? *(Blow)*

Something precious.

What?

(Jay forward; Sbo/Sifiso one beat later; SR group step in)

The Golden Fleece.

Aeetes rages and throws over the board. The people stone Jason. Aeetes raises his arm and they stop. He advances on Jason and begins to kick him. Each blow sends Jason sprawling. As he kicks he rages in a strange language.

(Piece to be inserted by Jay in Tamil- Aeetes sets Jason the task)

At a certain point Jason looks to Medea -)

Medea: A task.

Finally Jason is allowed to stand. He picks up one of the pieces and makes a move.

Medea:

He accepts!

Aeetes and co exit laughing

SCENE SIX

*Jason is lying in the desert- battered and bruised. Medea approaches, drawn to him in the night
Aetes searches the palace for his daughter, He cannot find her. Slowly his suspicions grow. What has she done?*

Medea:
I shouldn't be here
It's dangerous
I am Medea
I'm going
I can't
Be here
You can't
I've come because
It is not possible for you to complete the task
My father. ..

She rushes out and finding her father searching the palace distraught, she embraces him till he is calmed.

Chorus: It's not right!

Then she leaves him and goes back to Jason in the desert:

Medea: You will die
If I don't help you

Jason: It's okay. It's okay.

Medea: This is the task my father has set for you.
Harness the fire-breathing bulls.
Plough the field.
Plant the serpent's teeth.
Kill the giant's that spring up from the earth.
Only I have the charms that can protect you.

Jason: Protect me!

Medea: My father will never forgive me.

Jason: My father too was king.

She rushes out again to embrace her father. This time it takes a little longer to calm him.

Chorus: He's the golden man

Then she returns to Jason.

Jason: If you help me I will make your name great all over Greece.
(They kiss)

If you help me I will make you my wife.

Medea gives Jason a charm. At the same moment a woman pulls gifts from deep in her throat and then covers her head with sand. Medea leaves Jason speaking as she departs.

Medea: Take this charm.
Inside you will find the secret magic of the gods.
With this oil of moonflower, anoint your whole body.
Cover yourself from head to toe.
It will give you the strength and the knowledge
to complete the task.
You will be as powerful as the gods!

Chorus sings. Jason anoints his body and completes the task

Aeetes and Medea watch Jason complete the task with the bulls and the giants. At the end of the task, Jason screams in triumph, Aeetes rages in despair and spins Medea around. As they spin she steals the fleece off his back.

With the fleece in her hand she rushes back to Jason.

Medea: Honour your promise;
Love me forever!

She reaches in and removes her heart, beating, in her hand. She offers it to Jason who takes it and deposits it in his mouth

SCENE SEVEN

*The Colchian world explodes, falls apart, is shattered. The chorus crash against each other, against the walls. They fall and get up and fall again and again.
Jason and Medea flee Colchis. Two refugees escaping the wrath of Aeetes.*

Lights fade to black.

Clock ticking

SCENE EIGHT

Lights up on Medea. She is dressing in a hurry - shoes and wig in Greek style. She keeps looking at her watch as she dresses.

A member of the chorus enters with a chair. She places it in position and then stands next to it, holding a box of tissues. Medea rushes to the chair and sits.

Medea: I'm sorry I'm late.
How much time do we have left?
I have only eighteen hours.

Chorus: So, tell me about your brother.

Medea: Apsyrtus!

Chorus: Mmm.

(Apsyrtus gestures)

Chorus: Apsyrtus.

Medea: You must understand I had
just met the man of my dreams.
Do you know what that means?
To live in your dreams.
To touch them. To smell them.
To slip into the dense fog of your
dreams and live in them.
You see I had this dream:

Jason appears eating an orange. The juice runs down his mouth and he wipes it with the back of his hand.

And then he was there.
Flesh and blood.
At the river.
The golden man, the shining man,
The man who smelt of the sea.
He stood there glorious in his strength and beauty,
A hero and a god.
He spoke the language of my dreams
and I understood.

Chorus: But your brother.

Medea: I loved my brother.

Chorus: Yes?

Medea: I loved my brother.
Can't you understand?
I don't know whether I trust you anymore.
You Greeks are all the same.
Sound the same. Look the same.
Different. To me.
Send the bill to my husband.

Silence

When my brother was born
my mother died.
I was ten.

Chorus: You loved your brother.
(*giving tissue*)

Medea: We were trapped.
They caught up with us.
Apsyrtus and his men.
Jason didn't stand a chance.
He panics. He gets confused.
How much time do we have left?

Jason comes into focus again.

Jason. Jason.
What happened? Jason?

Jason:
You see my father was king.
And his father before him.
And his father and his father's father.
They were all great men.
Warriors; statesmen; traders; kings!
A long line of kings.
A dynasty.
I want to be like them.
Pure and strong.
I have to be like them.
It is my inheritance and my fate.

Medea: Apsyrtus.

Apsyrtus: Do you know what I should do to you?

Medea: You must listen to me. I am older than you.

Apsyrtus: You are not my sister anymore.

Medea: Jason?

Jason: You see my father was king.
And his father before him.
And I must. ...
I have to be like them.

Medea: What have you done?

Jason:
But Pelias stole the crown,
and when I asked him for it
he sent me for the fleece.
On this journey to the end of the world.
On this voyage deep into your dreams.

Medea: What have you done?

Jason: You must go back with your brother now.

Medea: What?

Jason:
You must go back with your brother now.
He has promised not to harm you.
I had no choice.
I must have the fleece.

Medea: You traded me for the fleece?

Jason: I had no other choice

Medea: Yes, you have one other choice
(then pick up pace)

Gift Image - pulled out of mouth by Medea.

Medea:
This is my story, Apsyrtus.
I was stolen by the Greeks.
Taken hostage.
Spirited away with a knife at my throat.
(Apsyrtus gets up)
Raped by them.
Jason and his men.
Barbarians.
You should be comforting me.
Helping me.

Apsyrtus: You don't belong to us anymore.

Medea: I brought you up. I nursed you.
Our mother died when you were born.

Apsyrtus: Now we have no father.
He has grown old because of you.
Old and mad.

Medea: Because of Jason.
Apsyrtus: How did he complete the task?

Medea: I don't know
I want to come home.
I can get you the fleece.
(slight pause in movement Jay)
But when we get back to Colchis,
you must promise to speak for me.

Apsyrtus: No. You will die.

Medea: You're so hard.
Why are you so hard?
He put a knife to my throat.
He made me come with him.

She cries

Apsyrtus: Stop it.
Medea: I thought you would save me.

Apsyrtus: Stop it.
(gives tissue)

Medea: I've been kidnapped. *(result of him saying 'stop it')*
Taken hostage.
Raped by thirty Greeks.
I need you to meet me on the island tonight.
On your own, unescorted.
I will bring the fleece.
Promise.

Pause

Apsyrtus

Pause

Apsyrtus: Yes?

Medea: Come alone.

He goes. Silence.

Is my time up yet?
In the end I had to choose *(taking off shoes)*

SCENE NINE (A)

Medea approaches Apsyrtus in the dark. She hides her wig and shoes behind her back. Suddenly Greek soldiers enter and grab hold of Apsyrtus. Jason cuts his throat. Medea runs to Jason distraught. Jason comforts her.
Wedding vows followed by wedding dance which is interrupted by:

Messenger:

You should have seen your father's face. *(pointing at her)*
It cracked and fell into a thousand pieces,
like a jigsaw puzzle blown apart; *(hands shaking)*
Blown away on a breath of air, *(right hand back towards Jason)*
When he heard what you had done to your brother.
When he came across the severed body of his son,
floating miserably on the sea *(making sea gesture)*
Gather up the limbs. Bind them together, piece by piece.
Digging a grave for them with bloodied fingernails in foreign soil.
While you sailed away to Greece, licking the toes of your new lover.
(point at her)

And a second time.

Messenger:

They lingered there for many days, waiting to close the grave
They couldn't find the shoulder bone, you see.
When finally they returned to Colchis, he had become old and grey.
His face came back together. But it was never the same again.
It had slid into a different shape, scaw. *(Sand)* He never laughs now,
Nor rages, nor issues any royal decree. He grasps at his sorrow *(hand at chest)*
like a sword and longs for death, *(point)* cursing his daughter.

SCENE NINE (B)

Jason crawls over to where the children are playing in the sand.

Jason: Listen to my story children.

There once was a wicked king called Aeetes.

He ruled over the Colchians in a land far away across the sea.

The source of Aeetes' power was a ram's fleece made of gold - a gift from the gods.

King Aeetes had a daughter who knew the secret magic of the gods. She was beautiful. She smelt like coriander, like cinnamon, like cloves. She was of the earth and moved in its medium.

One day a stranger came to Colchis from across the sea. He came before king Aeetes and demanded that Aeetes hand over the Golden Fleece. But the king was drunk and he became enraged. He was just about to kill the stranger when something changed his mind. He decided instead to set the stranger an impossible task. He told the stranger that he would give him the fleece if he yoked the two fire-breathing bulls of the sun, on the plains outside the city; if he ploughed a four acre field with them; if he planted the field with the teeth of a magic serpent from which would spring up giant warriors; and then if he harvested the field by slaying the giants. It was a task which no man could possibly perform but the stranger accepted. He was strong and he had the gods on his side. The next day he went out onto the plains and yoked the bulls, ploughed the field, sowed the seeds and killed the giants that sprang up from the earth. But the wicked king was so savage, so deceitful, so dishonest, that he refused to give up the fleece and ordered the-stranger killed. But the stranger was strong and he had the gods on his side and he stole the fleece and escaped with it across the sea.

SCENE TEN

Jason and Medea journey across the sea. The journey takes many years and during this time Medea gives birth to two sons.

Kurt exits with children

(3 waves before scene 11 starts)

SCENE ELEVEN

Medea enters with nurse and the children. They run through the surf and onto the beach. Jason follows with the chorus. They thank the gods they have returned safely. Slowly they realise something is wrong. There is no one about. The beach is deserted.

Jason: Where is everybody?
Why is the beach so silent?
Where are the people to welcome us back victorious?

An old, blind man combs the beach with a metal-detector, looking for items of value hidden in the sand. Jason goes to him.

Jason: Old man it is good to see you.

Man: Fuck off. Fuck off.

Jason: What is wrong?

Man: This beach is mine. Mine! All mine!

Jason: Why is the place deserted?
Where are the people? Where is everybody?

Man: Who are you?

I am Jason.

Jason: I am Jason.

Man: Go, sir. Begone from here. Away.

The old man starts sniffing

Wait. There's someone there.
Someone else. *(sniffs)* It's her. She's here.
You've brought her back with you.
Our father who art in heaven,
forgive my trespasses,
protect me from that crazy woman.

Jason: What is going on here?

Man: Go away. Run. Flee this place.
Go, quick, or they will kill you.
And take that woman with you, sir.
Let her go. Leave her somewhere else,
beneath a rock or underneath a bush.
Put a great distance between you and her,
for she will bring you nothing but trouble.

Jason: Stop babbling (*pushing him down*) I am Jason.
I was sent for the fleece. I have it.
I have returned victorious.

Man: The city is gloomy, sir, increased with further horrors.
Rumour has implanted in the people's timid ear.
Scarcely had you gone, when the streets were full
with tales of fearful, wild and savage deeds;
In Colchis, so they said, sir, you wrought such horrors,
And took a wife there,
(*To Medea*) A fearful witch, (*Medea noise[?]*) that killed her father. (*spits*)

Jason: Her father lives still.

Man: (*Sniffing him now, goes straight into his crotch*)
You smell a bit like her now.
(*Sudden understanding*) You have coupled with that barbarian,
explored her rivers, drunk her muddy pits.
Sticky allegiance you have made, sir.
We don't like her kind here, sir,
with due respect. They take our jobs.
Muddle our language. Seduce our sons.
Just look at you, sir. Greece for the Greeks! (*detector up*)

Jason: Where is Pelias now?

Man: The king, is a lying king.
Your journey was for nothing.
You've been tricked. Banished.
And all who take your part, or speak on your behalf,
Have been condemned to die, as traitors.

Jason: This is my land, my kingdom.
I was sent for the fleece. I have returned with it.
Why should I be banished now?

Man: I see it. I see it. (*spinning*)
You leave me here upon this beach.
You stride into the city of your fathers.
The streets through which you pass are silent.
All those you meet stand aside in fear. People flee your presence,
Scorn your wife and mock your savage children. (*spits*)
To Pelias you come, to present the fleece. (*forward with detector, lays it on floor*)
(*To Jason*) To demand your inheritance; that which he
has taken and withheld from you. He snatches
the fleece, refuses to give up the crown.
(*To Medea*) But Medea rescues you once more. (*spits*)
(*To centre*) A strange and savage trickery.
The king has two daughters,
excellent cooks both of them.

Medea, cunning in her sorcery,
 transforms their father,
 for a brief and fatal second.
 A little lamb for the evening stew.
 Their eyes fixed in glassy stare,
 they chop up their father and slip him
 into the boiling pot. The king howls,
 and writhes in pain as limb after limb
 is torn from his bleeding body, and still
 the glassy madness of his daughter's eyes,
 until the gory deed is done.
 (To Jason) Can't you see, that's all she knows (Points to Medea, behind)
 She takes the shortest cut
 (Over to Medea) Medea snatches the fleece and runs out into the night
 (Back centre) Then Acastus comes, your wicked uncle's son,
 And breaks in at your door with noisy mobs,
 Crying you are the murderer of his father (point at Jason),
 Who in that very night has met his death.
 Up you rise and try to speak, but all
 In vain. The people's shouting drowns your words,
 And soon they take up stones, and war begins.
 You draw your sword, and fight your way.

SCENE TWELVE

Second fleeing scene. This time Jason and Medea are joined by the children. As they run Jason speaks. He changes from fleece into Greek attire and Medea follows suit.

Jason: Why do you always rub that stuff on you?
 Go change your clothes. (off fleece)
 Put on perfume.
 You look like a boy. (wig)
 Why do you not put on my country's dress.
 In Greece you should be like a Grecian woman.

They flee some more. Again Jason runs ahead. Medea tries desperately to keep up with him. Pulling off items of clothing in an attempt to impress him until the stage is littered with her clothes. She begins to dress as a Grecian woman.

Jason: Do not brew potions anymore, (charm off – jacket on)
 Speak to the moon, nor disturb the dead. (shoes on)
 They hate that here, and I – I hate it too.
 We are not in Colchis now, we are in Greece,
 It is not monsters that live here but men!
 (All stop immediately – Jason looks at Medea, nods approval, pulls her to him. Kids and Dawn forward for snapshot)

They flee more and then they arrive and stand together, a perfect picture of a happy Grecian couple. B/O

Clock ticking

SCENE THIRTEEN

Lights ups on Medea standing in the space, dialling a number on her cellular phone. They are supervising the packing up of her home. The chorus are the movers. They cross the space with chairs, boxes etc. The Nurse brings boxes for Medea to label with a marker.

Nurse: Kitchen.

The phone rings

Medea: We must hurry. We've only got ten hours left.

Aegeus: Hello.

Medea: Aegeus?

Aegeus: Yes?

Medea: It's Medea.

Aegeus: Ah, Medea, good health to you.

Medea: Good health be yours, Aegeus.
Where have you been? I have sent word. *(Bo writes on box)*

Aegeus: I have been away on business.
At the ancient oracle of Phoebus.
I presented a suit on behalf of a client.
I just returned a short while ago.

Medea: Have you heard, Aegeus?

Aegeus: Yes. I've heard. I'm sorry.

Medea: *(To movers)* Put that over there.

Aegeus: Hello?

Medea: Sorry, it's the movers.
Did you get my message?

Aegeus: The message; yes.
I've been working on your file.
I've sent a package with the messenger.

Medea: What are my rights, Aegeus?

Aegeus: Why do you want to stay?

Medea: This is my place now.
I have nowhere else to go.

The Nurse shouts something at the movers.

Nurse: *Hurry!*

Medea: Help me, Aegeus. Appeal on my behalf.
Seek redress in the courts of Corinth.
Contest the divorce.
Have my banishment rescinded.

Aegeus: I am confused, Medea.
I thought this had been explained to you.

Medea: What?

Aegeus: I cannot help you, no one can.

Medea: Why

Aegeus: There is no legal course to take. *(Bo gestures for Dawn to put clothes back into suitcase – Dawn goes back to case and packs clothes)*

Medea: None?

Aegeus: This is very awkward for me.
I thought you understood.

Medea: Understood what?

Aegeus: You are an alien in Corinth,
your marriage has no status in law;
there is no need for divorce.
Jason is free to marry when he pleases.

Medea: We were married according to the rites of your religion.

Aegeus: You will always be an alien.
In Corinth, In Thessaly, in all the cities
of the Grecian Federation you are not a person.
You have no rights, only obligations.

Medea: Is this true?

Aegeus: I thought you understood. *(Noise)*

Medea: *(To movers)* Be careful!

Aegeus: Medea?

Medea: Right this is what I want you to do, Aegeus.
Sell all my shares; close my bank accounts;
Convert everything to cash.

Aegeus: There is nothing, Medea.

Medea: What?

There should be hundreds of thousands.

Even at today's poor prices, the shares alone are worth a princely sum.

Aegeus: I've just finished with the statement.

It's in the package with the messenger.

Unattached to a Greek citizen, #

You have no right to property in Corinth.

All that is left is a small allowance for basic

Sustenance. The rest reverts to Jason. *(Pause)*

I have spent the last few hours trying to find a way.

That is why I never called.

But I'm afraid I cannot do a thing.

Medea: Where am I to go, Aegeus?

Aegeus: Go to Athens. Leave this place.

Medea: Athens?

Aegeus: Amongst your documents you will find a card;

For one of my associates in Athens.

He will be your champion - duty bound.

I will guarantee sanctuary. But you must go alone.

I cannot take you out of Corinth.

Your own efforts must get you away from this place.

Nor must you reveal my involvement to anyone.

I must continue to work in Corinth -

Within the framework of its laws.

I wish to be free of blame in this regard.

Silence

Aegeus: Medea?

Medea: I'm here

Aegeus: I'll keep in touch. Alright?

Medea: Yes.

Aegeus: You are a strong woman, Medea.

You will be able to deal with this. I know.

Medea: I have to carry on packing now.

Aegeus: I understand.

Medea: Give my regards to your wife.

Aegeus: Goodbye, Medea.

Aegeus hangs up. Medea put down her phone. She is silent for a moment. Suddenly she turns to the Nurse.

Medea: Nurse!

Nurse: Yes!

Medea: Where is my husband?

Nurse: In the city.

Hy celebrate sy marriage with his friends.

Medea: Come, we'll go to him.

SCENE FOURTEEN

Medea arrives in the club. Jason is in the middle of his stag party. He doesn't see her enter. The chorus sees her come and stops their dancing. Slowly Jason turns to see Medea.

Medea: Come with me.

Jason: I can't hear you. *(argument under music – can't hear what they are saying)*

Medea: Come with me.

Jason: The music. I can't hear you.

They argue in gestures; she whispers something in his ear. He pushes her away and storms out of the club. The rest of the scene takes place in the street outside the club. The chorus become passers-by.

Medea: Where are you going? What's the matter now?

Jason: When will this end? It has to stop.

Medea: When did it begin, Jason?

Did I seek you out in your native land?

Did I seduce you from your father's side?

Did I force love upon you?

Did I snatch you away from your home,

Expose you to the mocking scorn of strangers?

Jason: You must go, before it is too late.

Medea: Where to?

Should I go back to Colchis, my father's house,

The soil we watered with my brother's blood?

Perhaps to Thessaly, Pelias's daughters.

They would welcome me with open arms.

I only killed their father.

Jason: Be quiet woman, show me some dignity.

Medea: Why? You've thrown me out!
He's thrown me out!
Does this body mean nothing to you anymore?

Jason: Creon wants you dead;
He hates the sight of you.
I won you exile instead.

Medea: Is exile a prize?

Jason: I don't know what you want from me, Medea.
I never lied to you - not once.
I told you what I wanted, why I came to Colchis.
I don't know what your problem is.
I married you. I gave you sons. But it is over now. There is nothing left.
We're not connecting anymore. This happens.
I want to be King; you want to be my wife;
I cannot be king while I'm married to you.

Medea: So that's it? You just stroll away,
Erase me, erase everything I've done for you?
Have I just died inside your memory?

Jason: What were you before I came, woman?
You have your home in Greece now,
instead of some barbarian land.
You have learned the blessings of law and justice.

Medea: What law, what justice?

Jason: You have won fame and fortune.
If you had been living on the ends of the earth,
no one would have heard the name, Medea.

Medea: What a great honour, to be Medea!

Jason: What do you want? The cars, the furniture,
The art? Take it, take it all. It's yours.
I'm tired of running. I want to stay in one place.
I want to be King.

Medea: No! You want a younger wife,
A Grecian wife. Your foreign one is passing
into an old age that does you little credit.

Jason: It was not for the sake of a woman,
That I made the match I have made.
I did it for the children. Our children.
To establish their future here in Corinth.

Medea: Words, words, magnificent words.
You are a coward. A coward. A coward.
If you had been an honourable man,

You would have told me of the match
and not kept your plans secret from your own family,
while all around the streets the people whispered
it behind your backs.

Jason: Calm yourself, woman!
For the sake of the children. Do you want them to
go through what we went through? Banishment; exile;
wandering. Here they will be kings, live in a stable home,
reap the benefits of my culture and my land.

Medea: What will become of them?
There will be step-brothers despising them,
mocking them, them and their mother,
the savage them from Colchis.
They will either end up serving here as slaves,
or else the bitterness gnawing at their hearts
Will turn them sour, make them loathe themselves.
Can I have a cigarette?

Jason: It is over, Medea. Finished. I am getting married.

Medea: You are already married.

Jason: Listen to me. It is over. Understand that.
We have moved too far apart.
I will not continue this discussion any further.
If you want anything of mine to assist you in your exile,
I am ready to give it with an ungrudging hand.

Medea: I will not accept anything from you.

Jason: I will give you letters of introduction to my foreign friends,
who will treat you well. If you reject this offer,
woman, you are a fool. Forget your anger,
and you will find it greatly to your advantage.
I have organized ...

Medea: Don't organize!

Jason: Heaven be my witness. I am willing to render
every assistance to you.

Medea: Go! Fuck off!
As you loiter here outside, you burn
With longing for the girl you've made your wife.
You have caught her smell between your teeth
and nothing will shake it off. Go!

He starts to leave

Medea: Jason.

Jason: What do you want?

Medea: You owe me a brother.

Jason: I gave you two sons.

Medea: Then give them to me.

Jason: No! They bear my name,
And Jason's name is not a name for savages.
Here they will be brought up in decency.

Medea: Then send them to me one last time,
That I may say a few things to them before I go.

Jason: I cannot let you see them, Medea.
It is better if you leave when they are
unaware of your departure.

Medea: So harsh. You take the husband from the wife
And now refuse the mother to her children.

Jason: I wish you well.
He goes, she is left alone. Nurse comes to her.

SCENE FIFTEEN

Creon enters

Creon: Ah, Medea.

Medea: What do you want?

Creon: The morning gathers, and your time runs out.

Medea: I know.

Creon: Are you prepared to go?

Medea: And if I were not; would you let me stay?

Creon: It is better for all that you go.
Your children are assured of wealth and future.
They will be raised as princes,
And one far day, who knows, perhaps they may journey
to Colchis and embrace their mother there,
grown old in years but of a calmer mind.

Medea: Why have you come? To tell me this?
Or is there something more you want for me?

Creon: Your husband carried wealth and treasure with him
When he arrived in Corinth. Spoils of the Argonaut campaign.

Medea: He keeps it in his house, go in and take it!

Creon: And is the golden treasure there as well,
The fleece, the prize won by the Argonauts?
Why do you turn away? Come, answer me!

Medea: No.

Creon: Where is it, then?

Medea: I do not know.

Creon: But you took it away from Pelias's house?

Medea: I do not remember.

Creon: Where is it?

Medea: I do not know.

Creon: I will not be deceived!
Did you take the fleece from Pelias?

Medea: I did.

Creon: And now?

Medea: I have it no more.

Creon: Who has?

Medea: The earth.

Creon: The earth? What does this mean?
You think to deceive me with your double meaning words.
Have you buried it?

Medea: Once long ago.

Creon: Where?

Medea: I have forgot.

Creon: Remember!

Medea: Why do you want it?

Creon: Who would not want it?

Medea: Why? what for?

Creon: It is a gift from the Gods.
It brings power. It brings majesty
to he who has it.

Medea: It brings misery;
It brings sorrow; it brings death,
to all who seek it.

Creon: Give up the fleece!

Medea: It belongs to me.
I took it from my father.

Creon: If you want to live, surrender it now!

Medea: Not now.

Creon: When?

Medea: Quite soon; too soon!

Creon: Then you will send it to me, before you leave?

Medea: Yes. I will send it to you.

Creon: What else have you concealed?

Medea: Many things!

Creon: Your property?

Medea: I will give you some.

Creon: I do not want your goods; keep what is yours.
Go! Get the fleece and send it to me.

Medea: Please accept a modest gift. For your daughter.
She has been so kind and good to me,
and she will be a mother to my children.
The fleece draws you; what will please her?

Creon: Do as you please. But know that Creusa is your friend.
Just now she asked if we might send the children to you,
for you to see once more before you go.

Medea: The children. Yes!

Creon: Because I thought you raving, I refused;
but as I see you calm, it shall be granted.

Medea: A thousand thanks, O kind and virtuous prince!

Creon: I will send the children to you.

He leaves

Medea: Where is it, nurse? Where is it? Where?

Nurse: At the beach.

Medea: Come!

SCENE SIXTEEN

Digging for the fleece and ritual transformation, accompanied by chorus of Colchian women. Then Medea sews dress from the earth and it is passed from hand to hand until it finally ends up with the nurse. The nurse runs around the space with the dress. She hands it to one of the chorus and continues running.

SCENE SEVENTEEN

Finally the nurse arrives back at Medea. She tells what she has seen.

Nurse: Toe ek daar arrive, ne, was die plek propvol mense.

Old people and young people;

Al die mense het gekom. The whole family.

En daar was baie presents.

And when I gave her the dress,

die mense was excited; sy ook.

When she heard the dress was from Medea,

she wanted to put it on right away.

Sy het die dress oor haar kop geslip;

but her hands got stuck in the lace,

that comes up to here;

she couldn't get them through.

Then she got her head through. She smiled.

Then her arms came through

en toe val die rok net so in place.

She looked beautiful.

Die mense was baie excited.

Sy het begin dans.

Almal het gedans. Ek ook.

Maar toe sy dans, toe realise ons,

daar's 'n problem. Her smile, her laugh

het skeef geword, distorted. Dit was asof

iets inside haar nie reg was nie.

En toe sien ons, daai golden dress van haar,

dit het gechange na yellow, en die yellow het gechange na orange,

en die orange het gechange na red,

and then before we knew it, skiet die flames tussen haar bene deur.

En dan was alles black, en dan was alles smoke.

When the smoke cleared, was daar nog flames,

rondom haar nek, and under her arms.

The flames was besig om haar flesh op te eet.

Sy het begin skreeu. Die mense het water op haar gegooi,

maar die water het die flames opgestook soos petrol.

En dan het Creon gekom, gerun. Ek het horn nooit so gesien nie.

Like a magnet to a piece of iron.

Without thinking, hy het gejump op haar,
en daar gestick soos glue. Creon en sy dogter,
they became one thing. His arms en haar arms,
his shoulders en haar shoulders,
his tummy en haar tummy,
his legs en haar legs.
Hulle het saamgesmelt tot een lump of flesh.
Vir 'n oomblik was daar silence.
Die smell was terrible.
Mense het begin siek raak.
En toe breek pandemonium los.
Die mense het mal geword. Hulle het geskreu, hulle het gehuil,
hulle het mekaar gebyt. Hulle het mekaar se kleure geskeer.
En ek, ek het uit daai plek uitgehardloop, as fast as I could,
so os 'n pyl uit 'n boog.

SCENE EIGHTEEN

The children enter and Medea goes to them. The nurse begins singing. Medea undresses the children, then leads them off the stage. The nurse carries on singing. When Medea comes back, she is alone dressed in the clothes of a Colchian princess. She goes straight over to the wall and two Colchian men lift her up so that she reaches the window.

SCENE NINETEEN

The chorus enter as a mob, some with weapons, raging at the death of the king and his daughter. Jason enters.

Jason: Where is she? Where is she? Medea!
Abominable woman. Murderous, loathsome, vicious
mongrel of a Colchian whore! What have you done?
To kill a king and his daughter in one foul blow.

He sees her up in the window, goes towards her. As he speaks the chorus begin fighting with each other. Images of war; battle.

Jason: No punishment, no torture is enough for you.
Come down! Come down and fight.
Why do you crawl around up there?
Come down and fight. To death!

As the chorus fight, the nurse starts laughing uncontrollably. Jason goes over to her and stabs her. The chorus stop fighting. Suddenly Jason becomes aware of the children's clothes lying in the sand. He goes over to them and picks them up then realizing that something is wrong he turns towards Medea.

Jason: Where are the children?
What have you done with the children?
Medea! Medea!

The chorus move towards him holding a crown. They place the crown on his head.