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Cast of Characters

NANNY

TUTOR

MEDEA'S TWO SONS

CHORUS

MEDEA

CREON

JASON

AEGEUS

MESSENGER

(Chorus is played by one woman.)

(Creon and Aegeus may be double-cast.)

MEDEA

A NEW ADAPTATION OF EURIPIDES
by Joseph Goodrich

(Darkness.)

(Lights up on NANNY *outside palace.)*

NANNY. What a mess. What a goddamn mess…
All this started years ago.

It's easy to explain
But impossible to change.

You can't change what's happened.
You can only wish it hadn't.

That's what I'm wishing now.

It all began
When Jason went to find the Golden Fleece.
He found a woman, too, and brought her home.
The first time I saw her,
I didn't know what to think.
She was different. Strange.
Not like us.
But she surprised us all:
She learned the language,
Learned the way we live,
And did her best to make
This place her home.

Everything was fine.
But now the fat is in the fire.
Jason doesn't love her anymore,
He's tossing her away like trash
To marry Creon's daughter.

It's killing her, Medea—
She doesn't sleep, she doesn't eat,
She cries and cries and cries.

What's worse, though, even worse,
Is when she doesn't cry at all.
She doesn't move, she hardly breathes,
Just lies there staring at the wall.
She doesn't say a word
But her thoughts are clear as day:
Inside that pretty skull of hers
Flesh bubbles in an oven,
A scalding surge of hatred burns
Behind those lovely eyes—
And I'm afraid the flames will spill,
The way a forest fire tumbles down a hill.

I'm afraid of what she'll do.
I'm an old wage-slave
And nothing much surprises me,
But I'm afraid.

I've had a stomach ache all week.

(The TUTOR *enters with Medea's* CHILDREN.*)*

TUTOR. Talking to the birds again?

NANNY. They're the only ones who'll listen. *(Pause.)*

TUTOR. No change?

NANNY. No. *(Pause.)* No.

TUTOR. There's nothing you can do?

NANNY. If you can think of something—tell me! *(Pause.)* I'm sorry. I just don't know what to do. How to help her, how to… *(Pause.)*

TUTOR. I heard something downtown today—earlier.

NANNY. What?

TUTOR. No. It's nothing.

NANNY. What did you hear?

TUTOR. Well, I'm not one for telling tales out of school, and it's probably nothing, anyway—

NANNY. Tell me!

TUTOR. Well—if you really want to know—word's going around that Creon's going to have her deported.

NANNY. No!

TUTOR. And the children.

NANNY. I don't believe it.

TUTOR. I'm only telling you what I heard. And what I heard is that Creon's declared her an enemy of the state and is having her deported.

NANNY. But why?

TUTOR. She's threatened the government, hasn't she? She said she'd kill the king, kill his daughter, kill Jason, kill—

NANNY. She's said a lot of things! She's sick, she's not in her right mind.

TUTOR. That won't stop Creon.

NANNY. Jason wouldn't let that happen to his own children. Her, maybe. But not the children.

TUTOR. What woman wants another woman's brats around the house?

NANNY. Quiet! Little pitchers have big ears! …Boys, it's time to go in. Cook has your lunch ready… Go on! Shoo!

(The CHILDREN *start toward the palace.)*

Whatever you do—keep them away from her.

TUTOR. Why?

NANNY. Don't ask questions. Just do what I tell you.

TUTOR. I don't think that's your—

MEDEA. *(Off:)* Shalassa telechma thalassi!…Shalassa telechma thalassi! Shalassa nadem shalavi!…Shalassa telechma thalassi!

(She wails.)

TUTOR. …What is she saying?

NANNY. 'I want to die. I don't want to live. I want to die.' *(Pause.)* Take the children in. Keep them away from her. Do what I say.

(The TUTOR *exits with Medea's* CHILDREN.*)*

…She's in that dark place now where
Nothing's good or true or right—
That place in the mind
Where there isn't any love,
Any hope, any light…
Just pain.
Breath is pain. Thought is pain. Blood
Runs through her veins, and that is also
Pain. She's like the sky before a storm,
Bruised and heavy and aching for release.
Please Heaven the storm will pass.

I don't think it will.

MEDEA. *(Off:)* No! You don't talk. You listen!…I said get them out of here. Do you understand me? I don't want to see them! I don't want to hear them! I wish they were dead! I wish they'd never been born! Get them out of here!

NANNY. The children haven't done anything!
Don't blame them for their father.
See the situation as it is. Use a little
Reason. Big-screen passions rip
The heart and set everything off-kilter.
And that's not good, that's not how
Things should be…

I'm asking too much. I should know better.
She has the luxury of being emotional—
I don't. I never have. I'm just as good
As she is, but I have to work for a living.
There's too much to be done, and only me
To do it…So I do it. Not happy. Not unhappy.
Not discontented or content. I may have nothing
When I die. But having nothing means there's nothing

I can lose.

*(*CHORUS *enters.)*

CHORUS. I hear her inside.
It hurts me to hear it.
She's my friend.
Is there any way to help her?
Any way to stop her suffering?
It tears me up to hear her all
Alone in Jason's house.

NANNY. This isn't Jason's house.
Not when Jason's tongue is in another
Woman's mouth, his heart is in another
Woman's hands, his body in another
Woman's bed.
Medea's in an empty house…
An empty heart in an empty house.
Nothing helps a woman when that happens.
Words are ashes. Friends mean nothing.

MEDEA. *(Off:)* God split my skull with fire!
Smash the fragile ghost of life
That haunts this ruined thing
Men call Medea!
God, please, kill me!
I'm dead but I can't die!
Kill me! Please, God—kill me!

CHORUS. Medea, listen to me! Can you hear me?
Don't wish for that. Don't pray for death.
Listen to me!…
Are you listening?…
A man's love is nothing much.
It changes…fades away…dies.
But life goes on. Love is found again.
Love is the important thing.
Love returns.
If Jason wants to leave you,
Let him go. Justice will be done.

Love's destroyers are in time destroyed.
Heaven sees to that.

MEDEA. *(Off:)* All the promises he made,
All the vows and sugared words
Were lies.
I gave up the ones I loved,
What I knew and loved and treasured,
All for him. Everything for him.
I bound my life to his—
And he guts me like a fish.
And you say Justice will provide?
If the God of Justice pulps their
Naked bodies in the silken wedding-bed
To blood and gristle, then I agree:
Justice has provided.

NANNY. You hear that? No earthly justice is enough
For her. She won't be satisfied with that.

CHORUS. Tell her I'm here.
Tell her I can help her if she'll let me.
Go and tell her that.

NANNY. If I come near—if anyone comes near—
She snaps and snarls like a wounded
Animal in a bloody nest. There's
Nothing I can do.

CHORUS. Get her.

*(*NANNY *crosses to the palace door.)*

NANNY. …I'll sing her a song while I'm at it. That'll calm her down.
I'll sing her a song and then we'll all be happy…

(She exits into the palace.)

CHORUS. One sweet day Medea
Stepped on board the Argo
With the man who claimed to love her;
And setting sail for Corinth,

Negotiating dangers of the sea and rocks
Around them,
Arrived here safely sheltered by the
God of Love who'd blessed them.
Now a different storm is threatening.
We hear her mourning murdered love,
Crying from the thousand wounds inflicted
When the one you love no longer loves,
And has already left you. Though
He smiles at you across the room,
He's already gone. He isn't there.
He's gone…

*(*MEDEA *enters.)*

MEDEA. You wanted to see me?
I was told you wanted to see me. Here I am…
Why do you look at me like that?
Am I that changed?…
Let me explain, and try to understand.
It isn't pride that keeps me locked away.
I wouldn't want you thinking that.
Some people hide themselves away like they
Were precious jewels, too special to be seen,
Too rare for common eyes like yours and mine.
Others you see everywhere, talking loud,
Laughing louder, making sure their worth is known.
You know I'm not like either of those. You
Know that. I have no reason to be proud. If
Somehow I've given you offense, that wasn't
My intention—not at all. Because I'm not
From here, I've studied how I should behave,
How to fit in best, and I've worked hard—so
Hard you couldn't guess—to lead the kind
Of life you lead…To become a part of you.
It's only right, I think. A stranger's often
Judged by nothing more than how she looks.
What's inside her doesn't matter when easy
Judgments have been made. I've done my best,
And you have given me your best.

So when you asked, I came outside to see you.
You deserve to know what's happened to me,
How I feel, what I am and what I want.
What I am is simple: Lost.
What I want? Well, you should know that, too:
What I want is death. What I want to do is die.

You should know the deepest part of me's
Been crushed. That nothing tastes right
Anymore. That silk grates against my skin,
Rubs raw the wounds that Jason opened with a word.
That he's the disease that corrodes and chokes me.
That he's ruined me.
Toppled me.
Broken me.
Left me…

When a woman steps off the auction block
And into the arms of the man who's bought her,
That's when the real horror begins:
He owns you now, and you can only hope that
Your master will be kind…At will he invades you
And degrades you. He takes his pleasure
As he pleases. You have no voice and you have
No choice. You can't leave but he doesn't have to stay.
If you accept this, all goes well. That's a happy
Marriage. 'What a beautiful home you have,' you say,
'And what a perfect husband! What a strong protector!
He goes and fights to keep you free and safe. He risks
His life to make your own a haven and a bower.'
Well, to tell the truth—I'd rather take a bullet
Than have another baby.

Do I shock you?
I didn't mean to shock you.
It must be easier for you, as these things go.
This is your home. When you dream at night of
Walking through a silent house, it's the house
You grew up in. You know the others like
You know yourself. You have family here. You

Have what I can only study and try to imitate.
You were born here—I was brought here.
You belong here—I was plunder. I'm a souvenir of
A happy trip, a fragment of a captured country, a quest
Concluded in success, something pretty from a foreign
Land to finger and discard when the traveler gets bored.

I'm alone here.
Can't you see that?
I'm alone here.
Alone in a way you'll never, never know.
I hope you never know it…

Well—I thank you for listening.
I know your thoughts are with me in this time
Of trial. And so I ask you this:
If I can find a way to do to Jason
What he has done to me—if pain can be made
To pay for pain—if hurt can vanquish hurt…
Let me.
Don't say a word. Don't say anything.
Promise me you won't stand in the way.
When a husband slits the throat of love,
Blood follows blood…
Promise me.

CHORUS. …All right.
I won't tell anyone.
I won't stand in your way.

*(*CREON *enters.)*

CREON. You. Medea.

CHORUS. It's the king.
It's Creon.
What's he doing here?
What does he want?

CREON. Medea, you are to leave the city of Corinth immediately.

MEDEA. …What?

CREON. You're an undesirable alien and an enemy of the state. As such you are no longer welcome here. Take your children and go. Now. *(Pause.)* Now, Medea.

MEDEA. But what have I done? Tell me. What have I done?

CREON. You've threatened Jason, you've threatened my daughter, and you've threatened me.

MEDEA. I haven't said—

CREON. No—don't try to deny it. It won't do any good. I know you, Medea. I know your kind. And frankly, I'm afraid of you. I know you'll try something. But I'm not going to give you the chance. You're smart and you don't care what happens. That's a dangerous combination. But I'm smart, too. Smart enough to know you don't pet a rabid bitch—you put a bullet through its head. *(Pause.)*

MEDEA. You say I'm smart. It's true: I am smart. I'm smart enough to wish I wasn't smart at all. It'd be so much easier to get along. Intelligence is a curse. Especially for a woman. It's always been that way for me. If I act or even think just a little bit differently from everybody else, they say I'm 'difficult,' 'stubborn,' unrealistic,' even 'crazy'… Maybe it's true—maybe I am all those things. I don't know. But you don't have to be afraid of me. What can I do to you? One poor woman against a man who embodies the strength and glory of Corinth…And you think I'll do something. That wouldn't be very smart of me at all, now would it? My trouble's with Jason, not with you or your daughter. You have the right to marry her to any man you choose. Allow me, by the way, to offer her my blessings and happiest wishes. The daughter of the king deserves nothing less…I myself deserve nothing. I know that. But you—you can afford to be gracious to someone like me, someone who has no throne, no crown, no army. It's true, you can make me leave. You can also let me stay. Your daughter has her happiness—let me keep my home. All I'm asking for is the privilege of staying in Corinth. Humble. Silent. Accepting and accepted. *(Pause.)*

CREON. Butter wouldn't melt in your mouth, would it?…The order stands: You will leave Corinth immediately. I'd rather have an enemy I can trust than a friend I can't.

MEDEA. Creon, please, I swear to you—

CREON. You're wasting your breath. The order stands.

MEDEA. Don't do this to me. Please don't do this to me. This is the only place I have in the world.

CREON. The world is very large, Medea. I'm sure you'll find another place in it. The order stands.

MEDEA. You can't do this. I'm a citizen!

CREON. So is my daughter. And I'm more concerned about her than I am about you. The order stands.

MEDEA. Zeus will remember this!

CREON. Will you go by your own power, or must I have you forcibly removed?

MEDEA. I'll go! I'll go! I'll go! I'll go! I'll go!

(She starts for the palace doors.)

(She stops. Pause.)

Creon—may I ask one thing? *(Pause.)* Just one thing? *(Pause.)* Will you listen to me?

CREON. I'll call the guards, Medea, if you cause me any more trouble.

MEDEA. I said I'll go and I will. I just want to ask you one thing first.

CREON. …What?

MEDEA. Let me stay another day. Please. One more day? I need time. Just a little time to figure out where I'm going to go, how I'm going to live, what to do about the children. Jason doesn't give a damn about—

CREON. That's hardly the way to—

MEDEA. But you—you're a father, too. Can't you show a father's mercy? I don't care what happens to me. It's them I worry about. They're so young, Creon. And life is so hard. *(Pause.)*

CREON. I have a heart, Medea. Believe it or not. *(Pause.)* One day. No more. *(Pause.)* Then you'll go.

MEDEA. I promise.

CREON. All right. But if you're not gone by noon tomorrow, I'll kill you myself…And that is also a promise.

*(*CREON *exits.)*

CHORUS. Medea.
Medea, who can help you now?
Where can you go?
Who'll take you in?

MEDEA. The game's not over yet. Far from it. If Creon and Jason and his woman think they're safe, they'd better think again. You saw the way I begged and pleaded, how I clutched his sleeve and cried? I humiliated myself: That was the price of another day in Corinth. I paid it, though—even if it made me want to vomit just to touch him…He gave me a day. He'll live just long enough to wish he hadn't. And then he'll join his daughter and my husband in the grave. I'll make sure of that…

The question now is, how will I do it? So many roads lead to the same destination… Should I burn the palace down? Or sneak into their bedroom, catch them in the act and hack away at tender flesh, stab and slice until I blunt the knife on bone?

No. I might get caught before I've had the time to act. The palace guards would kill me on the spot—but not before they'd forced me down and raped me, laughing as I cried, laughing at Medea, that stupid fucking bitch who thought she'd…

No.

Poison.

Of course.

Poison is the way.

I'm going to do it. I'm actually going to do it. I'm actually going to do it…

What'll happen next—where I'll go, who will take me in—I don't know. I may find out that what I've always feared the most, something I've always suspected, just might be true: That there is no home on earth for me at all. That I really might be as lonely as I feel. That I've always been alone, and always will be.

Well—if it's true, it's true.
I'll wrap my cloak about me and shiver in the sun.

But if there is a refuge, some shelter for me somewhere, then poison is my choice. And when they're dead, I'll slip away as softly as the death I've brought.

If not, I'll take my chances with the knife,
And give my life to see theirs ended.

Hecate,
Goddess of Night, Queen of the Moon, I swear it:
Those who hurt Medea are hurt by her in turn.
I swear it.
Now, Medea, make your plans.
You know what to do. Now you must do it.
Practice the woman's art, deception.
Bring them destruction.
Give them instruction in how
To die the way you've lived:
In torment.

CHORUS. …Medea?…Truth is the woman's art. Not deception.

MEDEA. No…It's deception.
Because the truth doesn't work.

CHORUS. When men's words are lies,
Gods desert the skies.
When men's vows have no worth,
Heaven changes place with earth
Water runs uphill.
Time stands still.
Honor disappears,
Washed away in women's tears.
(There is no honor in Corinth.)

Time to change the songs
That sing of women's wrongs,
Time to change the lies
That evil lives in women's eyes
—When men cannot be trusted.

Sing instead of sad Medea:

Another woman took the part
That once was hers in Jason's heart,
Lay with him until the light
Cooled the passions of the night;
She thought she owned the future.

Medea's life was torture.
No husband, no country, no home:

Medea was alone.

*(*JASON *enters.)*

CHORUS. Jason! What do you—

JASON. Hello, Medea.
Medea…
Time and time again
I've seen it happen:
The damage done by unreflective,
Misdirected anger.
All you had to do was quietly accept
The situation as it stands
And you'd have been allowed to stay.
—In luxury, may I add.
Instead, you burned your bridges,
Anger dominated reason,
And you end up empty-handed.
It didn't have to be that way.

Criticise me all you like, say anything
You want—it doesn't bother me a bit.
I'll be the first to admit that I'm far from
Perfect. But all the mea culpas in the world
Won't change the fact you've done this to

Yourself. When you threaten the king and
His daughter, you can't expect you won't be
Punished. People have been killed for less,
Much less, in better times than these.

And yet, despite it all, I did my best to
Keep you here. Does that surprise you? I
Did my best. I failed, but not because
I didn't try. Even though our situation's
Changed, it doesn't mean I love you less;
It only means there's someone I love more.
You hate me, you blame me—I know that. But
You won't always feel that way. So listen
To me, please. You must let me provide for
You and the children. I couldn't leave
You stranded; I wouldn't do that. And so
I've taken steps: I've spoken to the bank
And you'll never have to worry about money.
You'll never starve as long as I can help it.
You'll never go hungry, never be cold, never
Have to do without. That's a guarantee.

I want you to know something, and I want you
To believe it:
No matter what the future brings us,
Together—or, as it may be, apart—I've
Always felt, and will always feel, tremendous
Warmth for you. Tremendous warmth.

MEDEA. After what you've done
You have the gall to show up here
And say all that to me?
You hypocrite.
You fucking hypocrite.
You spit in my face and tell me
I'm beautiful?
You murder our love, then offer
To pay for the funeral?
Is that the way an honorable man behaves?
I'm glad you're here, though, in a way.

It gives me the chance to make you hear
The truth.
You've heard of it, the truth? It's like a
Woman's love: Undeniable, absolute, durable
As iron but shattered by a single lie.

When you were looking for the golden fleece,
Who killed the serpent wrapped around
The treasure? Anyone on board the Argo
At the time will tell you it was me.

Who wrapped himself in glory
When the fleece was found?

That was you.

Who murdered Pelias, who butchered
The old king and made sure his
Daughters got the blame?

Who left the home she loved,
Who tore apart her family,
Who threw her past away
In the madness of a moment?
Who has blood on her hands
And on her conscience?

Me.

Medea did.

Medea has.

Who was all this done for?
Who was I trying to please?
One man, and one man only:

You.
You, Jason.
Jason.
Jason.
Jason.
Jason.
Only you.

Whose love justified the butchery,
The damage and destruction?

Yours.

Your love…for me.
It's strange:
I thought I'd served you well.
I killed for you, I gave you children.
Two beautiful boys, Jason.
Or have you forgotten that?
You seem to have forgotten so much
Lately…

I'll ask you again as if I didn't
Know the answer in advance:
Honor the bonds that bind us.
Prove to me your word is good.
Take this hand and swear to me
You'll keep the promises you made
When I set out on this course with you.

…No?

Once you were happy to hold these hands.
You pressed your lips on mine.
You kissed these breasts.
I felt your hot breath on my neck,
My belly, my cunt…
You said I was your world. You said that.
You said so many things when we were close…
Tell me something now.
Pretend, for a moment, that you're my friend.
Tell me what to do. Advise me. I can't go home
And I can't stay here. By helping you I hurt
Myself: No one wants me, no one will have me,
No one will give me a place to rest. True, I
Was rewarded for my help—a husband. A home.
A future without worry, doubt or fear.
I hope your new wife is half as lucky.

She'll have to be.

In the world of things, what's true is easily
Distinguished from what's false. Fool's gold
Is just a stone. A diamond scratches glass.
Sandstone crumbles in your hand. But a man
Who lies with every breath looks just the same
As one you'd trust your life with…Until he
Snaps your neck in the middle of a kiss.

CHORUS. There's nothing more bitter,
More desperate and cruel,
Than loved turned into anger.

JASON. This torrent of words makes sailing
Difficult. I'm no good at making speeches,
But I'll try to navigate a passage through
This storming sea of lies.

Point one:
You exaggerate the part you played in my
Success. You helped me, yes, I don't deny
That. Others helped me, too. But the greatest
Help of all came from above. My success is
Due to Aphrodite—no one else but her. She
Blessed the Argo's journey, saw me through
The danger, brought me home again. I was
Guided by her hand; my success is truly
Hers—not yours or mine, but hers. Deny
That, and you deny the Gods.

Point two:
You say I swayed you, seduced you, swept you
Off your feet and ruined your life. Is that
Really true? Passion plays no favorites, Medea.
You're an intelligent woman. You knew what you
Were doing. You willingly surrendered to the
Thrill, and now you regret the consequences of
Your choice. Such regrets are only human; but you
Can't blame me for that. We choose our paths
Ourselves, and have to learn to live with what we've done.

Point three:
I admit you helped me. You even saved my
Life—for which I'm grateful. I fully
Acknowledge everything you've done for me.
I thank you for it; I always have. And yet
You carry on as if nothing in return was done
For you. And you know that's not the truth.
You've shared in my wealth and privilege. You've
Lived in a land of law and culture. I brought
You from some sun-drenched nowhere on the other
Side of nothing to the greatest country in the
World. This is where Democracy was born, where
Justice isn't just a word. Do you realize how
Truly great a gift that is? You should: So many
Dream of such an opportunity, and die attempting
To attain it.

Point four:
The question of my marriage. You've entirely
Misunderstood my motives. My decision has
Been carefully and calmly made: I've surveyed my
Prospects; I've considered your future and
The future of our sons; and I believed sincerely
That this marriage would have helped us all.
I came to Corinth—
Wait just a minute. I can't explain if you
Won't let me talk. Will you let me talk? Will
You please let me get a word in edgewise, or
Not?…

As I was about to say: I came to Corinth
From Iolcos with nothing—with fuck-all, if you
Want the truth—just another stupid peasant boy
Driven from his home by poverty and war.

I know from experience that a man without
Money doesn't stand a chance. You see him
Begging in the street, you shift your eyes,
He doesn't exist, he's invisible. He's the
Dirty little secret no one wants to know about.

I've been in that position, and I'm never going
Back. I didn't want that for my children, either.
I've made sure it'll never happen again: I'm
Going to marry the daughter of the king.

Do you understand a little better now why
I did the things I've done? It isn't that I'm
Tired of you. I'm not just chasing after younger
Flesh. I wanted to make sure that all of us—
You and me, the children—would never have to
Face the degradations of the poor. No matter what
You think, I love our boys, and I wanted to see
Them brought up right, with all the things I never
Had, all the opportunities I'd missed. There may
Be children from this marriage, I don't know
Yet what'll happen, if we'll be blessed the
Way that you and I were blessed. But if we
Are, I'd decided no distinctions would be made.
All the children were to share their father's
Love, and never need worry about their place in
The world.

I'd looked directly at the facts
And planned accordingly. I'd arranged,
At no small effort, for you and the boys
To remain in Corinth, protected and unharmed.

Yet all you do is undermine my plans,
Work against your own best interests,
And the upshot is my hands are tied
And you leave here with nothing.

Do something for me, Medea: From now on, think
Before you speak. There's got to be a brain inside
That lovely head, so do yourself a favor—use it
Sometime. The truth of the matter is this: you're
Jealous. That's what it boils down to. You're hurt
And disappointed that my bed's no longer yours. You're
Jealous, and you're striking out at someone who only
Wants the best for you…You think you're hurting me,
But you're really only hurting yourself. I wish

You'd see that…

There. I've had my say.
Welcome to the jungle, Medea.
I hope you enjoy it.

CHORUS. He's really convincing.
But I still think he's wrong.

MEDEA. When a man defends the damage that he's done
With such elegance and taste, I have to
Think he's twice as guilty: First for doing
Harm, and then for covering up his crimes by
Spinning lovely words. You and your kind
Disguise the death you bring with noble
Phrases, you hide the casualties you cause
Behind a veil of reason and morality.
You bend the truth to suit your needs.
All of you disgust me.
Jason, you're just a small-time thief
Compared to the ones who run this country,
But in your own small way you're as
Crooked as the rest. Why couldn't you be
Honest with me? I would've listened.
I'd have heard you out, and together we'd
Have come to a decision. Instead, you did it
Secretly, when you could have spared me pain.

JASON. If I'd told you earlier, Medea, what would
You have done? Help pick out the wedding
Gown?…No matter how I'd handled this, you
Wouldn't have agreed. You'd have only had
More time to feed your anger, make more
Threats, and dig a deeper hole for yourself.

MEDEA. That's why you said nothing? Or is it
Because you're getting soft in the gut
And you're married to a sand-nigger?

JASON. Look: I've told you: I wanted to give you
And the boys a measure of security. Believe me
Or don't believe me. I really don't care. It's

Your decision. I really don't care.

MEDEA. I don't want your money. Keep your money.
Choke on your fucking money.

JASON. You know, one night in a refugee camp and
You'll be praying for my money. You'll be begging
On your knees for my money. But you know what?
It'll be too late. You'll just have to crawl back in
The mud and go to sleep and hope they bring
Some food in the morning because your
Kids are starving.

MEDEA. You're the one who's sending me there.
You're the one who's making me an exile.

JASON. Don't blame me if you made the wrong choice.

MEDEA. You never gave me one! I had no choice!
Did I run off and leave you? Did I abandon
You?

JASON. You brought this on yourself by making threats
Against the government. You knew what would
Happen. You have no one to blame but yourself.

MEDEA. So it's my fault you won't keep your word?

JASON. That's enough! There's no point in continuing
This conversation. That's it. It's over. It's
Over, Medea. It's over!

My offer still stands: If there's anything I
Can do for you or the children, I'll do it.
I'll even put in a word with the embassy of
Whichever country you choose to live in. I
Will not, however, stand here and be accused
Of things I am not guilty of.

…Medea. Please. Accept my offer. Let me
Help you.

MEDEA. I don't want anything from you or from
Your friends. Don't offer. Because I

Won't take.

JASON. If that's the way you want it…

Then I call upon the Gods to witness
That I tried to help my family, but
My kindness was refused. So be it.
I wish you luck, Medea.
You'll need it.

MEDEA. What are you waiting around for? Your woman
Needs you. Why don't you go mount her? Go
Ride her bareback till she passes out with
Pleasure! Don't give another thought to me.
You'd just be wasting your time. Go on! Go!
…Go!

*(*JASON *exits.)*

Ride her while the horror looms above,
Waiting for the right time to descend…

CHORUS. When the fever of desire burns
Its sickness through the body,
Nothing matters but the illness
That consumes you.

Home and family, reputation—
You'll sacrifice them all with pleasure,
And mistake disease for love.

Aphrodite,
I don't want that kind of love.
I don't want the slamming doors and quarrels,
The angry words and angrier silences
That turn the bed into a battlefield.
I want the love that knows its measure,
That doesn't fracture,
That calms a ravaged heart,
That builds a home, not tears one down.

I think I'd rather die than be like that:
Condemned to drift forever,

Everyone a stranger,
No heart open to her,
Restless,
Rootless,
Lost.

*(*AEGEUS *enters.)*

AEGEUS. Medea…

MEDEA. Aegeus!

AEGEUS. Happiest greetings from an old friend and admirer.

MEDEA. I'm so glad to see you! What are you doing here?

AEGEUS. I'm headed back to Athens.

MEDEA. From?

AEGEUS. Delphi.

MEDEA. You went to the Oracle?

AEGEUS. Yes.

MEDEA. Did it speak?

AEGEUS. It did, yes. I don't understand what it said, but it spoke.

MEDEA. What did you ask?

AEGEUS. I asked for a child. For a son.

MEDEA. You don't have any children yet? But you've been married for—

AEGEUS. I know. *(Pause.)* It's not her fault.

MEDEA. Can you tell me what the Oracle said? Is it all right?

AEGEUS. It said, 'Don't unstop the wineskin's neck until…'

MEDEA. Until?

AEGEUS. 'Until you're home again.' *(Pause.)* Now what do you think that means?

(Pause. MEDEA *whispers in his ear.)*

AEGEUS. I hope you're right.

MEDEA. I'll pray for you and your wife. I have some potions that might help. I'll send you some.

AEGEUS. I wish I could do something for you.

MEDEA. What do you mean?

AEGEUS. It's obvious something's wrong. What is it, Medea? What's wrong?…Tell me.

MEDEA. It wouldn't do any good.

AEGEUS. You don't know that.

MEDEA. There's nothing you can do to help.

AEGEUS. Why don't you tell me, and we'll see. *(Pause.)*

MEDEA. Jason's left me. He's with another woman.

AEGEUS: …I don't believe it.

MEDEA. I believe it. I don't see why you can't. *(Pause.)*

AEGEUS. Who is she?

MEDEA. Creon's daughter. King Creon's daughter.

AEGEUS. Is he in love with her?

MEDEA. He's in love with wealth and power. I know that. *(Pause.)*

AEGEUS. What are you going to do?

MEDEA. Me? There's nothing for me to do but go and pack. I've been banished, you know. Exiled.

AEGEUS. What?

MEDEA. If I'm not out of Corinth by noon tomorrow, Creon will see to it personally
That I'm…executed.

AEGEUS. And Jason lets this happen? It's unbelievable.

MEDEA. He's too busy being noble these days. He suffers so well. You should see him. The sadness in his eyes, the tremble in his

voice—it's almost enough to make me think he believes what he's saying…Almost. *(Pause.)* Once I believed every word he said. *(Pause.)* Aegeus?…Can I ask you something?

AEGEUS. Of course.

MEDEA. Will you let me come and live in Athens? I don't have anywhere to go. I don't know what to do. There isn't one person in the entire world who'll help me. Not one person.

AEGEUS. …Yes, there is. *(Pause.)*

MEDEA. Aegeus…

AEGEUS. If you come to Athens, there'll be a place for you. No one will harm you there, no one will make you leave. I'll see to that. I can't take you with me—I don't want to create any kind of diplomatic situation with Corinth—but the moment you pass through the gates of the city of Athens, you'll be home, Medea. Home for good and all.

(Pause.)

MEDEA. Will you swear to that?

AEGEUS. Don't you trust me?

MEDEA. I trust you. But I don't trust my enemies. If you swear to it, no matter how they try to influence you, I know you'll keep your word. You have an excuse—you can say, 'I can't break a vow to the Gods'—and I have a promise I can count on. You'll swear to it?

AEGEUS. I will.

MEDEA. Then say this: I swear by the earth—

AEGEUS. I swear by the earth—

MEDEA. I swear by the sun—

AEGUS. I swear by the sun—

MEDEA. And by all the Gods above—

AEGEUS. And by all the Gods above—

MEDEA. To shelter Medea and protect her from her enemies.

AEGEUS. To shelter Medea and protect her from her enemies…

MEDEA. You know what'll happen if you don't keep that vow?

AEGEUS. I know. *(Pause.)*

MEDEA. I hope you have a safe and peaceful trip. And I hope the next time I see you, I'll be looking at someone who's going to be a father.

AEGEUS. I hope so, too…I'll see you in Athens.

MEDEA. In Athens!

*(*AEGEUS *exits.)*

CHORUS. Hermes, who protects the traveler,
Watch over Aegeus as he makes his
Way home.
A good man in a bad world
Deserves your care.
May he be given the son
He longs for.

*(*NANNY *enters.)*

MEDEA. Do you know what it's like?

NANNY. What what's like?

MEDEA. To be trapped…Do you have any idea?

NANNY. I don't have any idea what you're talking about, I'll tell you that.

MEDEA. It's a terrible feeling.
You beat your fists against the wall.
You cry and cry and no one hears you.

Sometimes, though, a door appears.
Sometimes, someone hears you.
And you step through that door
And you're back in a world you
Thought you'd never see again.

And then you weep with joy…

Go to Jason. Tell him I want to see him.
When he comes, I'll say: 'I've thought
About the things you said. I'm wrong,
And I admit it. Can you forgive me? Can
You forgive this foolish, stubborn, stupid
Woman?'

He will. Of course he will. There's nothing
He likes better than being told he's right.

He'll forgive me.

Then I'll say:
'I know there's nothing you can do for
Me—I've accepted what must happen, I've
Brought it on myself, I know that and
Accept that—but let the children stay.'

He'll let them stay. His pride will see
To that. He'll take them to the palace,
And each will bring a gift: A gown of silk,
A crown of gold, a tribute to the Princess
From one who humbly begs her pardon and
Offers her best wishes for a long and happy life.

She won't know I've rubbed the gold and
Silk with extraordinary poison.
She'll put them on, perhaps have time
Enough to spin her image in the mirror
Before her skin begins to burn, her brain
Begins to boil and her blood turns into
Flame.

It won't take long for death to arrive
But she'll think it takes…forever.

I'll have to kill the children, too.
You know that.
No one's
Going to punish them for what their mother's done.
No one.

I have no choice.

Jason was my world.
There's no world without him.
There's nothing left worth saving.
Absolutely nothing.

I believed in the sweetness of lies
And found that truth is bitter.
Jason will learn just how bitter it is.
The difference between us is this:
I can bear it.
I have strength he only dreams of.
I know my friends from my enemies
And act accordingly.
That's my strength,
And that's my glory.

CHORUS. Medea,
Now I know your plans,
I beg you: Don't do this.
Respect the law.
Life is sacred.
Find another way.

MEDEA. There is no other way.

CHORUS. How can you even think of killing
Your own children?

MEDEA. I've got to hurt Jason the way he's
Hurt me. To the bone.

CHORUS. Will hurting him like that keep you
From hurting even more?

MEDEA. That's enough! It's all just words
Until it's done.

(She turns to NANNY.*)*

Go tell Jason I need to see him.
And don't tell him anything you've heard.
I'm counting on you as a woman and a friend.
Remember that.

*(*NANNY *exits.)*

CHORUS. Athens is a city that's been blessed
As long as memory can recall. Its
People have been favored by the Gods;
Love and Wisdom guide its path;
Aphrodite wanders in its fields,
Breathes the flower-scented air,
And there she dreams the dreams
Of love we dream.

Do you really think Athens will welcome
A woman who's killed her children?
Do you?…

Medea?…

Think of the act itself.
Think of what it actually takes to
End a child's life—and you won't
Go through with it. You couldn't.
When you call the children to you,
When they come to you with open hearts
And look at you with love,
I know you'll never do it.

*(*NANNY *and* JASON *enter.)*

JASON. You wanted to see me? You asked for me, so here I am. Even though you hate me, I came. What do you want?

MEDEA. Jason…My dear, dear Jason…You've always been so good at understanding me. You forgive my rages, my fits of emotion because we've shared so much together in the past. I'm asking you to understand again, and forgive me. I've been thinking it over and I see how…unwisely I've behaved. All you've been trying to do is help me—me and the children—and all I can do is…Well, it's like you said: I really am my own worst enemy. Who am I to question how the Gods arrange our lives? Especially when it's not just me who's involved, but our children, too. You were thinking ahead; I was clinging to the past. I've been a foolish, stupid, stubborn woman, and I admit it. I think the alliance you've arranged is won-

derful—for you, for the children, for me—and I'm sorry I haven't played a bigger part in it. If I'd only been reasonable, right now I'd be laughing with the bride-to-be, sharing little secrets…Indulging in the pleasures that surround a wedding… There's no need to torture myself with all that might-have-been. It's enough to say I'm sorry. You could have shown a little better sense, though—you don't mind if I say this, do you?—a little bitter sense when I flew off the handle. That's how women are. They get upset and lose perspective. We rely on men for the reason and balance and wisdom we just don't have. But I can't be angry with you for that. This has been a difficult time for you, too. And all I did was make it worse. Forgive me…Can you do that?…Children! Where are you? Children!

(The CHILDREN *enter with the* TUTOR.*)*

There you are. There's my darlings. Come over here, please…Now: give your father a hug…that's right. Your mommy and daddy have had a nice long talk, and we're not angry at each other anymore. You've been brave little soldiers, but everything's fine now. Everything's fine. We're all very happy and…

(She begins to cry.)

…I'm sorry. I was just thinking of what the future holds for the innocent…Don't pay any attention to me…It's silly—everything's fine now, and I can't…Hold them tight, Jason. Hold them tight…Oh…Oh…

CHORUS. Your tears are making me cry…
Stop it here, Medea.
It's not too late.
Stop it now.

JASON. I'm glad you've changed your mind, Medea. It is really is for the best, all the things I've done. Of course I forgive you. And I don't blame you for feeling resentful or hurt or abused. Those are natural emotions when change occurs. You're using your head now, and I appreciate that. Your situation's not that bad, if you look at it calmly: You'll be taken care of wherever you are, and I look forward to the day when the boys return to Corinth and assume their rightful place beside their brothers. —You hear that, guys? All

you gotta do is get big and strong, look after your mother, and one day you'll be rich and powerful men. How 'bout that?

*(*MEDEA *cries.)*

JASON. Why are you crying now? Is being rich and powerful such a terrible thing?

MEDEA. No. It's just…I was thinking about them.

JASON. I'm thinking about them, too. And I'm doing something about it.

MEDEA. I know that. I know.

JASON. Then why all the tears?

MEDEA. …What if their future's not what you expect?

JASON. Why shouldn't it be?…Why shouldn't it, Medea?

MEDEA. That's the other reason I asked you here. Tomorrow I'm leaving Corinth. I understand it has to be that way and that I'm responsible. I understand that perfectly. But why should the boys suffer for something I've done? Is there any real reason why they should have to go, too? I think they should stay here, and you should raise them. I'll go—I've been ordered to leave, and I'll follow those orders—but they should stay. That's possible, isn't it?

JASON. That's Creon's decision, not mine.

MEDEA. You could persuade him.

JASON. I don't know, Medea. I don't think so…

MEDEA. It's possible that…No, I shouldn't say that.

JASON. What?

MEDEA. It's asking too much.

JASON. What?

MEDEA. I was just going to suggest that maybe she could talk to him. It wouldn't be right, though.

JASON. I don't see why not. I think she'd be happy to help you.

MEDEA. You really think so?

JASON. I'll make sure she is. It's not a bad idea, keeping the boys here.

MEDEA. I think so, too. I think it's a very good idea…Children, will you go inside and get the boxes on my dresser?…Hurry now.

(The CHILDREN, *followed by the* TUTOR, *exit.)*

I've got a present for the bride. Two presents, actually—a silken gown and a golden crown that will bring her happiness for the rest of her life.

JASON. Keep them, Medea. She doesn't need gifts to change her mind.

MEDEA. I want her to have them. It's the least I can do; I owe her that. And if it helps the boys, all the better.

(The CHILDREN—*each with a box—return, followed by the* TUTOR.*)*

MEDEA. That's very good. That's lovely. Now—I want you to go with your father and give those to the Princess. All right?…Make sure that no one touches them but her. They're very special gifts only for her. You understand?…Good. And then come back and tell me how it went. I want to hear everything went just as I hoped it would. Go on—quick like a bunny.

(The CHILDREN *start off.)*

*(*JASON *follows.)*

JASON. It's very good of you, Medea.

MEDEA. No, it isn't.

*(*JASON *exits.)*

CHORUS. …Now all hope is gone.
The children are dead.
It's as simple as that.
The princess thanks the children.
She takes the gifts they offer.
She opens the gifts as her new husband watches.

Her husband's name is Death
She dresses for their wedding.
He takes her in his arms and carries her away.
Jason watches, helpless.
The suffering he's brought is now his only bride.
Greed, desire and ignorance have seen to that.
Medea waits to hear the news.
You know what has to happen next.
Medea waits.
The agony of waiting grows.
You're going to kill your children.
Nothing I can say, nothing I can do will stop you.
You're going to kill them.
She's going to kill her sons.

(The TUTOR *enters with the* CHILDREN.*)*

TUTOR. Madam! Madam! I have wonderful news! Your boys have been allowed to stay! The princess was delighted with your gifts. You should have seen her smile when she opened them! She was absolutely delighted.

MEDEA. Did she touch the crown? Did she put it on?

TUTOR. Well—yes. Yes, she did. She was just going to try on the gown when we left.

MEDEA. I see. *(Pause.)*

TUTOR. Have I said something wrong, Madam? I thought you'd be pleased to hear the news.

MEDEA. I am pleased. *(Pause.)*

*(*MEDEA *begins to cry.)*

TUTOR. Madam? *(Pause.)* Are you all right? *(Pause.)* You mustn't worry, Madam. I know some day they'll come and bring you home. I'm sure of that. You'll see them again.

MEDEA. Thank you. *(Pause.)* You may go now.

TUTOR. As you please, Madam…I hope it's not out of place to say how happy I am for the children.

(Pause. He exits.)

MEDEA. Oh, you're my beautiful boys!
Now you have a city, a home, a place
Where you'll always be…away from me.
I have to go away soon, but I don't want
To. You must believe that. There's nothing
I'd rather do than watch you grow up, get
Married, take your place in the world.
I haven't had enough of you yet! Not
Nearly enough!
I had such hopes for you. I imagined so
Many things. I had so many dreams. You'd
Love me when I was old. You'd cry for me
When I died…
But it won't be like that.
I won't have you.
Someday perhaps I'll see two young men that I
Knew when they were young…
But they won't be you.
Go inside and wait for me.

(The CHILDREN *cross to the palace doors.)*

*(*MEDEA *turns to the* CHORUS.*)*

…I can't do it. I can't do it. I
Look at their faces and my anger
Melts. You were right. You were
Right! Hurting them would drive a spike
Into my heart that all of Jason's hurt
Could never heal. Never!
What's wrong with me?…My head's
Becoming as soft as my heart…My
Enemies would love to see me weak,
Weaken, love to laugh at poor…crazy…
Strange…
Medea.
Love to see
Medea
Love to see…

Anyone who doesn't care to watch
Should go away
My hand will not falter
My courage will not
No
No
No
It still could happen
We'll live in Athens
They'll make me happy
When I'm old
I'll be proud of them and happy
And they'll cry when I am dead
And my enemies
My enemies…
No.
There's no escaping it.
All roads vanished when she touched
The crown.
Nothing else remains.
No other choice exists.

*(*MEDEA *crosses to the* CHILDREN.*)*

(She kisses them.)

Your skin is so soft, your breath is so sweet…You're my darlings. Yes, you are. I told you to go inside…You're going someplace where you'll be happy. A place that's not like here. No one can be happy here. Your father took all the happiness here for himself…Go upstairs and wait for me. I'll be right in.

(The CHILDREN *exit.)*

I couldn't bear to look at them for another second…I know what I'm going to do is wrong. But that doesn't stop the anger.

CHORUS. I've thought things over carefully
And I've come to a conclusion.
I don't like it, but I think it's true:
People who don't have children
Are better off than those who do.

They're spared a thousand miseries,
Griefs and disappointments,
All the worries, all the questions,
All the tears.

Yes, I think they're better off…
But that's not why I think it.

Life is difficult enough.
We move like cattle
Through our daily rounds.
Why breed new oxen for the
Yoke of suffering and death?…

I know they're better off.

Bear your yoke as best you can
And wait for nothingness.

None of this would've happened
If those boys had never been born.

…Nothingness is best.

MESSENGER. *(Off:)* Medea!…Medea!

MEDEA. The word I've been waiting for has come.

(A MESSENGER *enters.)*

MESSENGER. Medea—you've got to get out of here. Any way you can. You've got to get out of here now!

MEDEA. Why should I leave?

MESSENGER. She's dead. The Princess. And Creon. You've killed them. *(Pause.)*

MEDEA. Tell me what happened. Start from the beginning. *(Pause.)*

MESSENGER. When your two little boys came into the palace with their father, we were awfully glad to see them. We knew how you'd been treated, and we were happy that you and your husband had settled your differences. One of the maids rushed over and kissed both of your boys, she was so touched at the sight of them. We all felt that way, I can tell you…I followed them to the princess's

reception room. She wasn't pleased at first to see them, not pleased at all, but your husband managed to smooth things over. He had just the right tone with her. 'Darling,' he said, 'that's no way to be'—or something very close to that—'that's no way to be. We're going to be married soon, and what I love you must learn to love, as well. You know I love these children. Why not give them the chance to love you, too?…Look, they've brought you something. Don't you want to see what they've brought?…You'll never find out if you don't come over here and take a look…' She came over, she looked at the presents—and you could feel the change in her. Her temper was gone like that. She was thrilled, there's no other way to put it. She kissed the boys, and then she kissed your husband., and then he said, 'You see? You see the happiness they bring? Ask your father to let them stay. For my sake.'

'For our sake,' she said, and kissed him again.

She put on the crown and swirled the gown around her. We watched her move across the room. Sunlight caught the movement of the silk. She stopped at the mirror to look at herself, started to speak to our reflections—and that's when it happened.

She began to shake and barely made it to a chair. She sat and shook and couldn't speak. Her eyes rolled back in her head. Bloody spit ran down her chin. She started to scream. The crown was melting in her scalp. We could smell the burning hair. Her skin began to char where the gown had touched it. She tried to stand up but she couldn't. She crawled on the floor and howled. Her face was being eaten away. She—

(He stops.)

…Oh, God—it was…it was so…I don't think I can…
And then…When we thought it was over…

Her father came into the room. He knelt beside the body. Then he lay beside it and held it close. He cried like people cry when they've lost the thing they love the most. He begged the Gods to tell him why it happened. He begged the Gods and cried. He said he wished he was dead.

He tried to get up and couldn't. The silk wouldn't let him go. It bound him to his daughter. And he began to burn.

And we watched it happen again.

And puking smoking blood, his wish for death was granted.

…He was the king. The king of Corinth…

(He exits.)

CHORUS. Actions have consequences.
Nothing happens in a void.
Strike someone and chances
Are he'll strike you back.
Simple truths.
But hard, so hard and terrible
To grasp.
Jason learned the truth today.
Heaven saw to that.

MEDEA. Forget they're yours.
Forget you love them.
You've got to go inside
And do what must be done.
Better me than someone else.
I tell myself that: Better
Me than someone else.
No one loves them enough
To do what must be done
But me.

Why can't I go inside?
I've got to go inside
And do what must be done,
And I just stand here.

I've got to hurry,
I've got to get away…
And I stand here.

Forget what you know
And go inside

And do what must be done.

It must be done soon.

It must be done—now.

(Pause. MEDEA *enters the palace.)*

CHORUS. I know the Gods are watching.
I know you are.
Why don't you make her stop?
How can you bear to watch
And not do anything to stop her?

All her years as wife and mother
Sacrificed in one red moment,
Wasted in an act of vengeance—
Why don't you stop her?

The sun shines down on darkness,
And still you do nothing.

(Screaming from inside the palace.)

She's doing it.
I never thought she'd—

SON #1. *(Off:)* Mama! Don't! Don't!…No!…No! NO!

CHORUS. We've got to do something.
We've got to stop her.
Should we go in?
Do you think we should?

(Screaming from the palace. Then—silence.)

*(*JASON *enters.)*

JASON. Where is she? Is she still here, or has she gone?…Where is she?

(Silence.)

JASON. WHERE IS SHE?

CHORUS. She's in there.

JASON. I'd find her if she wasn't. I'd track her down if it took me the rest of my life. You know what she's done, don't you? You heard what happened?

CHORUS. I've heard.

JASON. I'm here to get my boys. Someone might try to kill them for what that cunt's done. She's caused us enough trouble.

CHORUS. You still don't know what trouble is.

JASON. What? She's going to kill me, too?

CHORUS. Your boys are dead. Medea killed them both.

JASON. That's not true. Why are you saying that?

CHORUS. Your children are dead. *(Pause.)*

JASON. Where are they? Are they inside?

(He crosses to the palace doors.)

JASON. Open the door! Open the door or I'll kick the fucking thing down! OPEN THE DOOR! OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR!

*(*MEDEA—*with the bodies of their* CHILDREN—*appears above the palace.)*

MEDEA. Here I am, Jason,
The lioness who killed her cubs.
Say what you have to say, it makes no difference:
Nothing you can do or say can hurt me now.
The sun will carry me away.

JASON. I thought I hated you before. I thought
The limit of my hatred had been reached.
It hadn't.

Look at this…See how much I hate you?
I'm shaking with it. I wish I had these
Hands around your neck. I'd choke the
Evil out of you. Maybe the Gods can
Understand the things you've done. I
Can't. I'll never understand and I'll
Never forgive. I don't want to understand.

I want revenge. I want your blood. I want
To see you dead.

Years ago I took a dirty savage bitch
From her shit-hole country and brought her
Home with me. That was my mistake. I knew
You'd killed your brother. I knew you had
To leave and I was your ticket out. I didn't
Care. I wanted you. So I took you. I brought
You here. And you destroyed my life.
You fucking filthy child-killer.
You heathen bitch.
You fucking animal.

MEDEA. Zeus knows what I've done for you and
How you treated me. Say what you want.
He knows the truth. You can't love me
One day and throw me away the next.
You can't have me exiled just because
I'm inconvenient to your plans. You
Don't break vows when you get tired
Of keeping them. Jason, you can't do
That and get away with it.
Not with me.

You call me a savage, a heathen, an animal.
You say I'm evil. Of course I am; I have to
Be—it's so much easier on the conscience
To know you're saving the world and not
Just acting in your own self-interest.
Tell me—who's the real savage?…Call
Me anything you like if it makes you happy.
What does it matter when I've got what I
Want: Your heart on a stick.

JASON. This hurts you, too. Don't tell me it doesn't.

MEDEA. What's my suffering compared to yours?

JASON. I didn't murder them!

MEDEA. Of course you did—they died in bed with you and your whore.

JASON. I didn't want to fuck you any more—so you killed them?

MEDEA. Your sons are dead, Jason. What do you think?

JASON. You're insane.

MEDEA. What if I am? Sane or insane, either way, your boys are dead.

JASON. Stop saying that!

MEDEA. Of course I'll stop saying it, but that won't bring them back.

JASON. I want their bodies, Medea. Give me their bodies and I'll go, and we can bring this to an end.

MEDEA. You can't have them.

JASON. I want to bury them, Medea. I want to be able to visit their graves.

MEDEA. I won't have them anywhere near you—dead or alive. I'll bury them myself in sacred ground and you'll never know where they are. You'll know where I am, though: I'll be in Athens, sheltered by Aegeus, safe from all my enemies.

JASON. I pray the Gods destroy you.

MEDEA. Go ahead and pray. I'm sure the Gods will listen to a lying, cheating gash-hound and do anything he asks.

JASON. You are…unspeakable.

MEDEA. Go home, Jason. Go bury your wife.

JASON. …I had two boys. Two lovely boys…

MEDEA. Don't cry now. Do it when you're old.

JASON. I loved them.

MEDEA. I loved them, too.

JASON. You killed them.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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