

MEDEA

Euripides

Morning. The CHILDREN's elderly NURSE enters from MEDEA's house.

NURSE: Through the dark grey razor-sharp rocks
How I wish the ship of Argo
Never flew to far off Colchis,
And the cut pines hadn't fallen
On the wooded slopes of Pelion,
Out of which the oars were fashioned
For the hands of men the finest,
Who went off to fetch the gold fleece
At the order of King Pelias.

Had this voyage never happened,
Poor Medea, who's my mistress,
Had not sailed to Iolcus Castle,
Heart on fire with love for Jason,
Where she wouldn't have persuaded
Pelias' girls to kill their father,
Nor be living here in Corinth
With her husband and her children,
Where her loyalty to Jason
Was so pleasing to its freemen,
Since a woman's safest conduct
Is agreement with her husband.
Closest friendships turn to hatred.
Deepest love is disregarded.
Jason's made a royal marriage
With the daughter of King Creon,
Who's the ruler of this country.

Poor Medea, scorned and slighted,
Shouts aloud his wedding pledges
And the solemn oaths he uttered;
Calls the gods to be her witness
How he's broken every promise.
Giving in to her emotions,
She lies fasting, she lies weeping.
All her day is passed in teardrops,

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Since she learnt of her betrayal.
Eyes and face are firmly downcast.
Hears no more the consolation
Any friends may try to offer
Than a rock in choppy waters,
Saving when she twists her white neck
To bewail her dear old father,
Home and country she surrendered
For the man with whom she came here:
Since he's treated her so badly,
She has learnt through this disaster
Just how vital is your homeland.

Now alas she hates her children,
Has no pleasure when she sees them.
I'm afraid of what she's planning,
For she has a dreadful temper,
Cannot bear to suffer wrongly.
As I know her I'm suspecting
She will stab right through her stomach,
Having sneaked into the chamber,
Where the bridal bed is laid out,
Kill the king and then the bridegroom,
Taking chances on the outcome.
For she is a holy terror:
Take her on in any contest,
You'd be most hard put to beat her.