

# Medea: The Fury

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## AUDITION SIDES

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### AEETES

You might be wondering why I want this Fleece so badly. It's a legitimate question. When the Argonauts asked for it, I just about lost it.

On the surface of it, I could have given it up. They offered to make war for us, and indeed Colchis was being harassed by a lord who thought himself very important and was building an army the size of his ego. And the good-will with Iolcus is, rationally, speaking, worth more than the Fleece.

But I didn't do it.

Do you want to know the reasons? There are reasons, you know. I could say that the Fleece was a priceless, irreplaceable pelt of a unique, fabulous beast that flew to Colchis. I could tell you that the Fleece and the terrible serpent that guards it give our nation symbolic power to those around us who might get greedy. And both facts are true.

But these "reasons" are, really, post-hoc. They have nothing whatever to do with-- with why I refused a powerful group of godly-born men the prize for which they'd traveled so long.

No, there are no reasons. Only a **cause**. Like a river makes your boots wet, likewise I had as little choice in my actions, because I *love that Fleece*. And it's mine.

## Scene: Hera Interview

[HERA sits smoking.]

HERA

What I don't understand is why you're so obsessed with it.

INTERVIEWER

It's a crime that needs to be settled, Hera.

[HERA shrugs.]

What.

HERA

There are crimes all over. Jason's. Pelias's... *Yours*.

INTERVIEWER

Pelias?

HERA

Anyway, what do you want to know? Hurry up, I've got young mortal women to punish.

INTERVIEWER

[clears his throat.]

I understand that Jason was under your protection.

HERA

That's right.

INTERVIEWER

Why didn't you help him when he lost the most?

HERA

[Shakes her head.] For two reasons: First, by the time Medea did what she did--

INTERVIEWER

Is *suspected* of doing.

HERA

[waves that off.] Jason was on his own. And second, no, I didn't cover that sort of loss.

INTERVIEWER

Why were you protecting Jason to begin with, Hera?

HERA

It was actually only a side effect of my larger goal to punish Pelias.

[HERA approaches the ritual and examines it.]

INTERVIEWER

By killing him?

HERA

Hey, Medea killed Pelias. Actually, [laughs] she had his own daughter do it. I think I'm a little distant to be implicated in this.

INTERVIEWER

Why did you want to punish him?

HERA

He failed to show me the proper respect in a ritual.

INTERVIEWER

And...

HERA

What do you mean, "and...?"

INTERVIEWER

Are you telling me all this happened because Pelias snubbed you in a ritual?

[HERA nods.]

## **Scene: Apsyrtus Interview**

[Enter APSYRTUS. As the WATERS walk by him, he takes the mannequin pieces. During this scene, APSYRTUS tries to assemble it back into his body, and possibly clothe it.]

APSYRTUS

I blame Medea for what she did to me, of course, but foremost I blame love. I know it sounds strange, but it's love that—if she were not so in love with Jason—I mean, why else would—in other words, how could she? How could she?

[MEDEA enters, fidgeting.]

I'll be clearer: Romantic love. Okay? That's the problem. Not like love for your puppy, or some boy band, or your father. It's the romantic love that trumps the other kinds, and let's face it: unfairly.

It took me a while not to blame myself. Looking back, it's kind of stupid, right? Blaming yourself for getting murdered. In other words, so—in other words the reason I was there at that time, on that boat, was because I had betrayed my father. Horribly. With Medea. That was always on my mind. At that point. I couldn't shake it. It was one of those decisions. You make it, you never feel right about it. I had to do it.

In other words I had all these guilt feelings, all the time. So when I died—was killed (I keep needing to remind myself), all I could think about was that I'd gotten what I had coming. And maybe I did, in some sense. But not from her! Not from her! If I'd died from a falling brick—in other words, not by a person, but by some freak accident, or a god, or even my father, *that* might have been justice, yes? I'd been thinking that Medea was doing that justice, but no, she wasn't. Or she had no right to. It just doesn't seem right to me anymore. I don't think I should have died that day.

## Scene: Hecate Interview

[MEDEA gets robe, smells it, holds it to her, eventually cries as the interview progresses.]

HECATE

What is it?

INTERVIEWER

I wanted to get your side of the story.

HECATE

I don't have a side.

INTERVIEWER

Of course you have a side.

HECATE

Nature does not take sides. No right and wrong. I'm nature.

INTERVIEWER

Nature has no right and wrong?

HECATE

No right and wrong. I'm nature. Lion kills gazelle. Gazelle kills grass. A storm swells *naturally* when changes occur in atmospheric pressure. Nature is as brutal as it is kind. Beyond right and wrong.

INTERVIEWER

Well, the point's academic...I understand you gave Medea her power.

HECATE

[laughs]

INTERVIEWER

What's so funny?

HECATE

*Real* human power doesn't come from gods.

INTERVIEWER

Medea was a sorceress.

HECATE

Medea was a sorceress.

INTERVIEWER

A sorceress needs a divine source of power.

HECATE

For her magic.

INTERVIEWER

Well, that's what we're talking about, isn't it?

HECATE

If you want to talk about magic, we can talk about magic. I thought we were talking about her crimes.

INTERVIEWER

It's all tied in together.

HECATE

That logic seems academic to me.

INTERVIEWER

If you had not been her divine benefactor, Hecate, none of this would have come to pass.

HECATE

Medea was able to channel my energy on occasion. She was a good witch.

INTERVIEWER

She was no Glinda.

HECATE

Not in the sense of "good versus evil" good but in the sense of "good versus incompetent" good. She was full of love. Love is the source of magic. Love for your god. Love for what you believe in.

## Scene: Medea Talks to Alcestis

MEDEA

Paying for what you desire is never easy. And paying for this wish is going to prove incredibly pricey. And it is going to be most difficult. You look like a girl who could adapt to a little difficulty.

ALCESTIS

I don't believe you. I don't believe in magic. My father didn't believe...doesn't believe...

MEDEA

This night, I will show you of what I am capable. I am going to prove to you that if you truly desire your father's health, you will be willing to do anything to see it happen. You see how sick this ram is? You will cut the ram into pieces, then put the ram into this cauldron. I will then cast a spell, and the ram will emerge with a youthful, healthy body. Such can be the health of your ailing father, but first, the ram. May I suggest a lateral incision at the throat—

ALCESTIS

You can do that?

MEDEA

What?

ALCESTIS

Restore health. Complete health and longevity of life?

MEDEA

Yes.

ALCESTIS

What—are you a—a—are you a witch?

MEDEA

If you wish. Some prefer sorceress. Now holding the scalpel--

ALCESTIS

Oh. Oh, I don't know. I don't—

MEDEA

Would you prefer a different blade?

ALCESTIS

I mean, you're a witch--

MEDEA

I prefer to think of myself as a procurer of desires. Alcestis, your father will die within six months if we, if you don't act this night. [ALCESTIS is crying.] Alcestis! Do you understand?

ALCESTIS

[ALCESTIS nods.] But I don't understand--why would you help me? Help Pelias? What is it you want?

MEDEA

Oh, yes, my payment. You will surrender the Fleece to me.

ALCESTIS

What! You're taking the Fleece?

MEDEA

No, your giving me back what is rightfully mine in exchange for relieving your father's suffering. You want your father's suffering to end, don't you? Wouldn't you do almost anything to protect the one you love?

ALCESTIS

I...I don't know that...I need to think.

MEDEA

While you are thinking Pelias cries for pity and the salt from his tears will pour into his bedsores and his heart will burst from the pain he feels and you will be on your velvet cushion thinking: Where will you be while he is rotting in his grave? Will the river of tears you cry be for your father's excruciating death or for your own inability to make the decision to act?

ALCESTIS

By the Gods, Medea, quiet down!

MEDEA

I shouldn't have come. I'm simply going to choose to be amused by your naiveté and pretend that I didn't waste my

time on an ungrateful whelp. Your father deserves his daughter.

ALCESTIS

Okay, okay, please, Medea—

ALCESTIS

No, please, I'll do it. I'll do it! Take the Fleece, just please! Please Medea, save my father.

MEDEA

[Grabs ALCESTIS by the collar.] You'll do it? Yes? Why don't you begin by selecting an instrument you feel comfortable with. [Medea unrolls a selection of surgeon's cutlery.]

## **Scene: Acastus Throws Jason Out**

[PELIAS'S COURT have JASON captured. He is brought before ACASTUS and ALCESTIS.]

ACASTUS

Jason.

JASON

Acastus.

ACASTUS

My captain.

JASON

Well as your captain I order you to order your guards to release me.

[ACASTUS nods to PELIAS'S COURT, who let JASON free. JASON tries to walk out but the PELIAS'S COURT stops him.]

ACASTUS

My father, King Pelias is dead, Jason.

JASON

I heard. I am truly sorry for your—

[ACASTUS slaps JASON.]

ACASTUS

It's your ambitious treachery that killed him!

JASON

The blood's on Alcestis's hands, not mine, Argonaut.

ACASTUS

I'm not an Argonaut anymore.

ALCESTIS

It was the witch. She tricked me, Acastus! She did

ALCESTIS

She tricked me!

ACASTUS

I know, I know.

JASON

Witch.

ACASTUS

Your Medea, Jason! Your Medea made Alcestis kill her own father!

ALCESTIS

Oh, the gods help me! That witch—what I saw, what I did, the gods save us from that witch!

JASON

Medea and I were in the Argo  
the whole time!

ALCESTIS

The ram, she brought a  
Ram back from the dead!

JASON

What on earth is she talking about?

ACASTUS

Your play at innocence—disgusting. You're a crappy liar, Jason.

JASON

Your sister is obviously quite insane.

ACASTUS

How dare you!

[ACASTUS fights JASON. ALCESTIS screams and tries to scratch her face off. A GUARD stops her and tries to calm her. JASON beats ACASTUS quickly. PELIAS'S COURT step in a beat him up while ACASTUS tends to his bloody lip.]

I can't prove your hand in this; otherwise I'd have you put to a painful death. You *and* that demon you brought to Greece. If you are not out of the state in forty-eight hours I'll do it myself. She'll destroy you too. But not in Thessaly. Not in Thessaly.

[PELIAS'S COURT are holding a beaten JASON up. ACASTUS punches him in the stomach.]

Get him out of here.

## Scene: Atalanta Talks to Jason about Medea

JASON

She's different, isn't she. A sorceress. A being, a creature, different. Greater. Powerful.

ATALANTA

Jason, that's kind of what I wanted to talk to you about.

JASON

Medea?

ATALANTA

Yes, Medea and her power—what she's capable of.

[JASON is silent, starting to get angry.]

That display—that...on the boat...I mean, without a hesitation, just...bam...body part one...bam body part two. [laughs. Silence.] It came out of nowhere, it...we just want to know, Jason, just—just be careful.

JASON

"We."

ATALANTA

Well...

JASON

"We." You're speaking for yourself, right? Don't presume to speak for the crew. I think others see her for the asset that she is.

ATALANTA

I care about you. I just want to make sure you understand—

JASON

I think I understand.

ATALANTA

Wait. Jason. Stop. You don't understand anything.

JASON

Come on, Atalanta. We never would. I mean we are friends and now I see what...I'm sorry.

ATALANTA

Jason you are way off.

JASON

Now there's another

JASON

Woman on the ship, and one who's prettier and more powerful.

ATALANTA

I can't believe--

JASON

All eyes on you.

ATALANTA

I can't believe this. Jason, if you think being a woman alone on a ship with a bunch of men is some fantasy-- If you think that I was on the Argo for you...for the idea of you and I, please.

JASON

Oh, come on. It's like us at Lemnos, Atalanta. We were the only men. We had our choice. We could have the best.

ATALANTA

That's just the point,

JASON

We could have all of them!

ATALANTA

It's not the same,

ATALANTA

It's not the same at all

JASON

It's the same!

ATALANTA

Never mind. Never mind, it doesn't matter. It has nothing to do with it, but I'm--just forget it. Jason, I talked to the rest of the crew,

JASON

The *whole* rest of the crew?

ATALANTA

No, not all of them! Some of them. Men included.

## **Scene: Medea Makes a Scene at Dinner**

MEDEA

[Waving him off.] Jason had come for the Fleece, out in Colchis, and our eyes laid on each other for the first time and bang! Love love love love love! Soon after, he told me we'd go back to Greece and be married. All the promises Jason made and the plans, oh my.

AEGEUS

So romantic! Jason, you devil!

MEDEA

For ten years we've been in Corinth. And we have two beautiful boys.

AEGEUS

Boys! What a blessing. What are their names?

JASON

Pheres and Mermerus.

MEDEA

Beautiful boys. They're just the light of Jason's life.

AEGEUS

I had a dog named Mermerus once.

MEDEA

Our boys...all the blessings of my house. The blooms in my garden.

AEGEUS

He was a good dog.

MEDEA

Going through those kinds of things, the adventures, the kids, the—the *time* together. Builds a love so so strong. Have you ever been in love, Glauce?

[silence.]

CREON

Glauce's still quite young.

MEDEA

Yes, just a girl.

GLAUCE

Do you think I'm too young to feel love?

JASON

Nonsense. Love is fleeting at first, and grows with time. Love at first is just a spark that starts a warm fire.

GLAUCE

Love starts bright and grows to something greater.

JASON

Love changes, is my point.

MEDEA

Does it? I like Glauce's fire symbolism more. Please tell me more about this love you know.

JASON

Love grows, love shrinks. I think we can leave it at that.

MEDEA

"Love shrinks?" Oh, I love the way my husband turns a phrase. It is one of the reasons for which I chose my husband's bed sheets to adorn...his literary prowess.

AEGEUS

Ha ha! And the wit on this one!

JASON

I just mean to say-- Just meant--love can change, that's all.

MEDEA

Changefulness is a sign of weakness, my love. Love in a strong heart can be consumption...like fire. As Glauce has experienced. Or will soon learn.  
[MEDEA starts to exit.]

CREON

Glauce isn't uneducated, Medea. She knows what love is.

## Scene: Jason and Medea Fight

[MEDEA is packing. JASON enters.]

JASON

Going to the Aegean for the weekend?

[MEDEA says nothing. JASON sits down.]

What's going on, 'Dea?

MEDEA

I have to go.

JASON

I can just wait here until you're ready to tell me what's going on.

[Silence. MEDEA continues to pack. JASON is fidgety, obviously unable to wait.]

Medea! Damn it, what are you packing for?

MEDEA

Congratulations on your engagement honey.

JASON

What, now you're suddenly mad about this? Look, I am Jason of Iolcus

JASON

And I can marry who I  
Want to when I want to.

MEDEA

Leave me alone.

MEDEA

Not without consequences, Jason.

JASON

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

[MEDEA exits to get something.]

Don't walk out when I'm talking to you!

## Scene: Aphrodite's Monologue

[During this scene NURSE bathes MEDEA, who is listless.]

APHRODITE

I liked Medea. I mean she was one of mine. Lovely beyond compare. She did not need witchcraft; she was witchcraft: the hair, the skin, the eyes above all. Mm! I could look at those eyes all day. She was...very much a ten. How could I not love her.

INTERVIEWER

It sounds as if...you desired her.

APHRODITE

[Almost cutting him off and whispered.]  
Oh very much.

[pause.]

But she was to be made useful. Being beautiful isn't enough these days, is it now? So I sent my son to do what was asked of me. But, in answer to your question, I liked Medea.

INTERVIEWER

Eros made her fall in love?

APHRODITE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

With his...his

INTERVIEWER

Bow?

APHRODITE

Bow, yes.

INTERVIEWER

Instantly.

[APHRODITE NODS.]

## **PLACES**

*ATHENS* (AA-thins)

*COLCHIS* (KOLL-kiss)

*CORINTH* (KORR-inth)

*IOLCUS* (YOLL-kuss) Jason is heir to this city state, ruled by Pelias for most of the play. In Thessaly.

*THESSALY* (THESS-uh-lee) The part of Greece that Iolcus is in.

## **CHARACTERS**

*AEGEUS* (uh-GEE-us) king of Athens.

*AETEES* (EE-tees) king of Colchis, Medea's father

*ALCESTIS* (al-KESS-tis) Pelias's daughter.

*ACTOR* (ACK-tor) The insecure Argonaut.

*APSYRTUS* (ap-SIR-tis) Medea's brother.

*ARGUS* (AR-gus) An Argonaut. Built the Argo. It's named after him. Older man.

*ATALANTA* (at-uh-LAN-tah) Female Argonaut. Fell for the golden apples trick long ago. Friends with Polyphemus and Jason.

*CREON* (KREE-on) king of Corinth. Glauce's father

*DEMONS* (DEE-mins) Hecate's

*EARTHBOORN MEN* non-speaking. They fight Jason on the plains of Ares.

*EROS* non-speaking. Aphrodite's son. Shoots love arrow (AKA cupid.)

*FIRE BULLS* Non-speaking. Fire-breathing bull that fights Jason on the plains of Ares. (2)

*GLAUCE (GLAU-kee) Beautiful daughter (age 15-25) of Creon*

*CORINTHIAN GUARD 1 Corinthian guard who accompanies Creon*

*GUARD2 Iolcian guard who escorts Jason and Medea away*

*COLCHIAN GUARD 1 Colchian guard at outer gate.*

*COLCHIAN GUARD 2 Colchian guard at outer gate.*

*COLCHIAN GUARD 3 Colchian guard inside palace.*

*HECATE (HECK-ah-tee) Goddess Medea worships*

*HERA (HAIR-uh) Goddess. Zeus's wife. Jason's guardian for much of the story.*

*INTERVIEWER Zeus, determining the after life fates of the principle characters.*

*JASON captain of the Argo, becomes Medea's husband*

*MEDEA (meh-DEE-uh) Colchian princess and sorceress. Marries Jason.*

*MERMERUS (MER-mer-us) one of Jason and Medea's twin sons (means stone)*

*NURSE Medea's nurse. Named Helen (means light)*

*OLD WOMAN Hera in disguise.*

*PELIAS (PEL-ee-yus) Jason's cousin, ruler of Iolcus*

*PELIAS'S COURT Stand around King Pelias. At least 3 actors.*

*PHERES (FEAR-eeze) one of Jason and Medea's twin sons )*

*POLYPHEMUS (pol-EE-pee-mus) An older Argonaut. Used to fight centaurs.*

*SERPENT non-speaking. Guards the Fleece in Colchis, takes Medea away at the end.*

*WATER The river Jason must cross. At least 3 actors.*