MEDEA “Killed the children” scene

(1 Man , 1 Woman)

Medea (MIH-DEE-UH)

Medea.

What feeble night-bird overcome by misfortune beats at my door? (Jason takes two steps up to her) Can this be that great adventurer. The famous lord of the seas and delight of women, the heir of rich Corinth — this crying drunkard On the dark doorstep? — Yet you’ve not had enough. You have come to drink the last bitter drops. I’ll pour them for you. (She displays her hand which is covered with blood.)

Jason.

What’s that stain on your hands?

Medea.

The wine I was pouring for you spilled on my hand — Dear were the little grapes that were crushed to make it; dear were the vineyards.

Jason.

I came to kill you, Medea, Like a caught beast, like a crawling viper. Give me my sons, that I may save them from Creon’s men, I’ll go quietly away.

Medea.

Hush, they are sleeping. Perhaps I will let you look at them : you cannot have them. But the hour is late, you ought to go home to that high- born bride ; the night has fallen, surely she longs for you. Surely her flesh is not crusted black, nor her forehead burned bald, nor her mouth a horror. (Jason kneels on the steps, painfully groping for his sword ) She very young. But surely she loves and desires you — Surely she will be fruitful. — Your sword you want? There it is. Not that step, the next lower. No, the next higher.

Jason.

( Stands erect. Goes up two steps to her) I’ll kill you first and then find my sons.

Medea.

You must be careful, Jason. Do you see the two fire-snakes That guard this door? (Indicating the two snakes) Here and here: one on each side: two serpents. Their throats are swollen with poison, Their eyes are burning coals and their tongues are fire. They are coiled ready to strike: if you come near They’ll make you what Creon is. But stand there very quietly. I’ll let you Look at your sons. Open the doors that he may see them. (The doors open revealing the Two Boys soaked in blood.)

Jason.

(Flinging his hands to his temples and cross-ing up to pillar Right) I knew it already. . . . I knew it before I saw it. No wild beast could have done it.

Medea.

I have done it: because I loathed you more than I loved them.

Jason.

Did you feel nothing, no pity, are you pure evil? I should have killed you The day I saw you.

Medea.

I tore my own heart and laughed: I was tearing yours.

Jason.

Will you laugh while I strangle you?

Medea.

I would still laugh. (Jason lunges at her but is sent back by Snakes ) Beware my door holders, Jason! These eager serpents.— I’d still be joyful to know that every bone of your life is broken: you are left helpless, friendless, mateless, childless, Avoided by gods and men, unclean with awful excess of grief — childless!

Jason.

It is no matter now? Who lives, or who dies.

Medea.

You had love and betrayed it: now of all men, you are utterly the most miserable. As I of women. But I, as woman, despised, a foreigner, alone. Against you and the might of Corinth, Have met you, throat for throat, evil for evil, vengeance for vengeance.

Jason.

(Turning to her on bottom step) What does it matter now? Only give me my boys: the little pitiful violated bodies: that I may bury them In some kind place.

Medea.

To you? You would betray even the little bodies: coin them for silver. Sell them for power. No!

Jason.

(Crawling up two more steps at her feet) Let me touch their dear flesh, let me touch their hair!

Medea.

No. They are mine. They are going with me: the chariot is at the gate

MEDEA

Go down to your ship Argo and weep beside it, that rotting hulk on the harbor-beach, drawn dry astrand, never to be launched again — even the weeds and barnacles on the warped keel are dead and stink : — that’s your last companion — And only hope : for some time one of the rotting timbers will fall on your head and kill you— meanwhile sit there and mourn, remembering the infinite evil, and the good that you made evil. Now I go forth under the cold eyes of heaven — those weakness-despising stars : — not me they scorn.

(Medea goes into the house — Jason starts after her but the door is bolted in his face. He collapses to the ground in front of doors. Medea is seen coming out Left door bearing the Two Boys and exits.