

MEDEA

by Seneca (4 B.C. – 65 A.D.)



GENERAL DIFFERENCES

Medea by Seneca

- There is no Tutor
- Medea is outside the palace
- The chorus consists of Corinthians
- Aegeus doesn't appear
- Jason is "forced" to get married
- Jason keeps the children

Medea by Euripides

- There is Tutor
- Medea is outside her house
- The chorus consists of women
- Aegeus is willing to protect Medea
- Jason consciously decides to do so
- Medea offers the children to Jason

GENERAL DIFFERENCES

Medea by Seneca

- Medea asks Jason to return to her
- Jason keeps the children
- Jason claims he loves his children
- Jason seems more compassionate

Medea by Euripides

- Medea doesn't beg Jason
- Medea offers the children to Jason
- Jason ignores his children
- Jason seems irrational

GENERAL DIFFERENCES

Medea by Seneca

- Medea uses witchcraft
- The death narration is brief
- Medea is decisive
- Medea kills her children on stage
- She also kills her children to take revenge for her family.

Medea by Euripides

- Medea uses poisonous objects
- The death narration is long and explicit
- Medea has second thoughts
- Medea kills her children off stage

(21) **Medea:** Let him live. Through unknown cities, let him
Wander, hungry, friendless, in fear for his life,
Hated, homeless, and let him knock at the doors
Of strangers, plead, and rudely be turned away.

(33) The Sun, who is mighty father of my race,
Rises still in the east and sets in the west,
But he must pause, look down, amazed, appalled,
Depart from his usual course, and bring to Corinth
Death and destruction.

(41) I wish I believed but I don't. What retribution
There is, I shall have to contrive myself, devise
With my own two hands. My womanly hesitations
I must suppress, and civilization's restraints
In which I no longer believe. Did I ever? Do you?
Horror, we know, is real. The rest is a dream,
Pretense, or a children's story we cannot
Quite abandon.

(53) The labor of a child pales
Compared to the bringing forth of the bloody truth
Of what life is. Having been shamed already,
Shameless I shall repay a wound with a wound.
His sin cries out for expiation – now!

(111) **Second Chorister:** A foreign woman, let her go back to her own
People, the land of her birth. Our ways were never
Her ways. She was never comfortable here.
It's better for us, and better for her as well.

(128) I have done evil,
And may again! What love could accomplish, hate
Can also accomplish. The blood I've shed commands
His fear if not his gratitude and respect.
They say he had no choice, but that's never true.
There's always death's way out. A sword point cuts
Through all the compulsions and threats. If he loved me,
As I loved him, he would have refused, defied
King Creon's whim, or fled for love and honor.

(183) **Creon:** These Orientals don't understand
The value of human life the way we do.
I wanted her killed, but, no, they wouldn't listen.
My daughter and her new husband wanted her life
Spared and I gave in. We settled on exile.

(439) **Medea:** What was Jason thinking? Was it Creon he feared?
But what should a hero fear? How can a lover's
Passion pale that way? A heart full of love
Has no room left for cowardice.