

MEDEA

an original screenplay

by

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INT. MEDEA'S LIVING ROOM - MIDDAY.

Faint sounds of the car starting and CREON driving away pass and the NURSE creeps into the room. MEDEA remains lying on the floor.

NURSE

Lord help us! Where will we go? What will we do? God help us if there is even more trouble coming!

Medea's voice is muffled by her arm.

MEDEA

(muffled)

Things have gone badly in every way, no doubt of that.

She removes her arm to reveal eyes burning with anger.

MEDEA

But not these things this far, and don't imagine so.

She bolts up from the floor and marches out of the room and up the stairs.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

There are still trials to come for the new-wedded pair, and for their relations pain that will mean something.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS.

MEDEA enters the bathroom and starts the water in the bathtub. She takes off her clothes and give them to the NURSE as if they were contaminated, then steps into the tub. She begins to wash herself from head to foot.

MEDEA

Do you think that I would ever have fawned on that man unless I had some  
(MORE)

MEDEA (CONT'D)

end to gain or profit in it? I would not even have spoken or touched him with my hands. But he has got such a pitch of foolishness that though he could have made nothing of all my plans by exiling me, he has given me this one opportunity.

MEDEA steps out of the shower and wraps herself in a towel. She wraps her head as well, looking like a movie star in some opulent scene. Her skin glistens.

She reaches out and wipes the steam from the mirror with a palm, until only her face is visible in a small circle in the center of the mirror.

MEDEA

And in this time I will make dead bodies of three of my enemies--the father, the girl and my husband.

INT. MEDEA'S ROOMS - CONTINUOUS.

The large suite comprises a bedroom and an office, all interconnected. The sacred goddess altar is now out in the middle of the floor of the bedroom, larger and more ornate than before.

MEDEA comes in and throws open her closet doors, rifling through garments while planning. She takes out several suits, pink, white and tan, conservatively cut. She looks at them in the mirror but rejects them in turn.

MEDEA

I have many ways of death which I might suit to them, and do not know which one to take in hand; whether to set fire underneath their bridal mansion, or sharpen a sword and thrust it to the heart, stealing into the place where the bed is made.

She discards the tan suit and frowns.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

There is just one obstacle to this. If I am caught breaking into the house and scheming against it, I shall die, and give my enemies cause for laughter.

She finally selects a light purple pantsuit, which has a large and flowing jacket with red flowers over it. This outfit is loose and feminine, unlike the restrictive, discarded suits. She puts on the clothes, then proceeds to do her make up.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

It is best to go by the straight road, the one in which I am most skilled, and make away with them by poison.

MEDEA surveys her reflection with satisfaction.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

So be it then.

Going into the office, she sits down at the computer and begins to sort through files, making copies onto disks, tracking stock quotes, checking news headlines.

She pauses abruptly.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

And now suppose them dead. What town will receive me? What friend will offer me a refuge in his land, or the guaranty of his house and save my own life?

She stares at nothing for a moment, clearly thinking.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

There is none. So I must wait a little time yet, and if some sure defense should then appear for me, in craft and silence I will set about this murder.

MEDEA sighs, then finishes with the computer and puts several disks and printouts into her briefcase and snaps it shut.

She places the briefcase next to the door and picks up her purse. From it she extracts a tube of lipstick and touches up her lips. When she is finished, she continues.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

But if my fate should drive me on  
without help, even though death is  
certain, I will take the sword myself  
go forward.

She turns and kneels before the altar.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

I swear it by Her, my Mistress, whom  
most I honor and have chosen as  
partner, it shall not be that any man  
shall be glad to have injured me.

INT. MEDEA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS.

MEDEA comes out of the house energetically, almost exuberant. She gets into the car and drives off, shouting to herself.

MEDEA

Ah, come Medea, in your plotting and  
scheming leave nothing untried of all  
those things which you know. Go forward  
to the dreadful act. The test has come  
for resolution. You see how you are  
treated. Never shall you be mocked by  
Jason's wedding, you whose father was  
noble, whose grandfather was Helios.

She pulls the small sports car into the heavy traffic. Adeptly, she speeds in and out of lanes on a highway, cutting off a BMW being driven by a MAN in a suit who is talking on a cell phone.

He flips her off. Medea chuckles slightly and waves to him.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

You have the skill. What is more, you were born a woman, and women, though most helpless in doing good deeds, are of every evil the cleverest of contrivers.

She turns on the radio and tries several different stations, but all of them are soft-rock love songs.

Leaving off her tirade against Jason, she speaks more to herself.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

I consider both stupid and lacking in judgment those who write songs for absorbed lovers. None of them have yet discovered how to put an end with their singing or musical instruments to grief. How good if music could cure men of that! But why raise your voice for happy love? It serves no purpose.

She changes stations again and comes across Janis Joplin singing "A Woman Left Lonely." MEDEA turns the volume up all the way, and the car races down the freeway in the late afternoon light.