

Review of culpability
from medea's
vengeance and
jason's disloyalty as
described ...



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Penned in a time of legend and antiquity, Euripides' meditation on 'where love was once deepest a cancer spreads' elucidates the self-serving infidelity and untempered vengeance of both Jason and Medea, respectively. Initially painted as a victimized and desolate character, Medea's inner disdain is the source of her poisoning those that do wrong by her, with her infanticide crime, exacting dread and turmoil on her 'cruel husband.' Indeed, Jason's 'mockery' of Medea by seeking every opportunity for social advancement and thereby marrying Glauce results in a direct blow not only to Medea's heart, but also to the entire house. Yet, even though Euripides skilfully forces the audience to accept Medea's sympathies, the viewers, and readers, are still inclined to feel contempt to the actions of a 'child murderer' who has brought the ultimate suffering on so many. Therefore, despite Jason's 'criminal behaviour', both the characters and the audience are seemingly shocked at the protagonist's excessive displays of grief, which in turn, are the seeds of her dark force.

Voiced through the Nurse, Jason's unfaithful decision of 'marri[ying] the daughter of Creon' leaves Medea in ruin, now an 'exile' and bearing a 'heart transfixed by desire for Jason.' Indeed, Jason, whose demise illustrates Euripides' judgment of surrendering too much to the whims of 'wisdom...and prudence', is selfish, naive and overly rational, which is evidenced by when he ironically urges the children to "grow to manhood" - with the audience all but appalled. Furthermore, the self-deluded views and values of Jason: having a 'famous name', security and 'money' is the basis for his justification of his decisions. Jason ironically asserts that he has 'acted like a true friend to [Medea] and to [his] children' by prioritizing his family to 'live

comfortably.' Thus, through Jason's quarrels and self-justified actions, Euripides suggests that the ancient Greek values of order, equality and justice cannot be achieved, when individual motives, ideas and wishes are at the forefront of one's judgment. Yet, Jason's egotistical action of marrying into royal blood as a response to his fading reputation and to ensure 'equal footing' for his son's, is, however, not uncommon in Greece within 431BC, as the playwright asserts that a large proportion of the Athenian audience would have understood that a man such as Jason must pursue the necessary methods to move upward in society's hierarchy. Ultimately, Jason represents the upper echelon of what it means to be reasonable; the type who can vindicate his actions, whatever they may be, as meant for the benefit of all, while leaving emotion unchecked.

The 'impassioned' and 'ungovernable' soul of Medea is, principally, the driving force, which guides the protagonist to elicit dread on Jason and wreck havoc upon the royal house. Hence, Medea's explication that 'passion is the master of [her] reason' attempts to catch the readers off guard to her having 'special knowledge' in which she utilizes to turn the 'anger that weighs on her heart' to 'make corpses of her enemies.' Therefore, one can marvel at Euripides' sophisticated construction of Medea's character; in one moment, she is 'anguished' and depicted as carrying the plight of martial betrayal and the other, a shrewd character - all too clear in her mind. Such a notion is further supported through Medea's ironically 'unheard of scheme'; for example, Medea ensures that King Aegeus receives her 'in [Aegeus's] country and at the hearth of [his] home' before commencing her plan. Furthermore, the 'anger of [Medea]' that weighs heavily on her heart and '

won't die down until someone's felt the force of her thunderbolt' pierces her former counterpart Jason, whose helplessness and ignorance, as he continues to take Medea's honeyed words at face value, the reason for his downfall. Here, Euripides is effectively employing his strategy of dramatic irony, where the audience is aware that Medea's words that are seemingly sweet to Jason are actually laced with poison. Thus, Medea is an 'enemy to be feared', especially to Jason, as the strength it took to 'plung a sword into [her] children' was the strength and life robbed from Jason after sighting his dead children. Consequently, Medea's cold-blooded revenge is the dreadful climax that the audience were simultaneously privy to and also dreading, with the 'visible corpses of the children' epitomizing Jason's hollow and cursed fate at the claw's of Medea's rage.

From the outset of the play, Euripides evidences how the actions of characters are required to align in order for a tragedy to occur, with the initial sympathy of Medea's sorrowful plight blinding the audience and thereby strategically positioning Medea on an unsuspecting platform to plan her gruesome act. It is through this notion that the former 'barbarian' and passion corrupted Medea - reinforced by the Nurse's bewailing of the dire fate of her 'mistress' - utilizes both methodical and rational scheming for the demise of Jason and the royal house, and thereby seeks to exasperate the extent of her revenge. Clearly, such savageness and brutality undermines Euripides' aim to put the audience, and prophetically a modern audience, in situations that cause a high degree of discomfort, and even horror, as a means to give pose more problems than the play has answers. That being said, the stage direction in which Medea 'sinks... to her knees

and seizes... Creon by the hand' underscores her skillful manipulation of characters such as King Creon to execute her machinations, which not only leads to the ultimate revenge on Jason, a man cursed by his children's 'bloodshed', but also paints a picture of Medea's ability to steer her heart to withstand the pain. Primarily, Medea is instinctively resourceful in that she assesses and considers all her options before executing her inauspicious plan, making her vile act all the more unfathomable and problematic for Jason and the audience to grip.

As such, Euripides condemns both Jason's infidelity and Medea's mercilessness and radically provides; no hero, no villain, and, ultimately, no relief or resolve.

Yet, despite endorsing Medea to exact revenge on Jason, the audience are all but left to accept the depths of Medea's outrage, with the degree of her internal hatred for Jason and the ability to carry out her repugnant crime, shocking readers.