

Medea Character

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Characters

Major

- **Medea (the sorceress and revengeful woman):** Princess of Colchis and granddaughter of the sun-god Helios. She is unmatched in magic and intelligence. She falls in love with Jason and abandons her family to help him win the Golden Fleece. But in Corinth, when Jason decides to marry the princess Glauce, Medea takes terrible revenge. She kills Glauce and her father, Creon, with poisoned gifts, and to inflict the deepest pain on Jason, she kills her own children. Medea symbolizes female power, vengeance, and rebellion against society.
- **Jason (the hero and betrayer):** Leader of the Argonauts and hero of the Golden Fleece expedition. He succeeds only with Medea's love and help. But for power and prestige, he seeks to marry Glauce, the princess of Corinth. In Medea's eyes, he is a faithless husband. Jason represents ambition, selfishness, and patriarchal society.
- **Creon (the king):** King of Corinth and father of Glauce. He wishes to make Jason his son-in-law. Seeing Medea as dangerous, he orders her into exile. But Medea tricks him into granting one day's delay, during which she sends the poisoned gifts that kill both Creon and Glauce. He symbolizes political power and authority.
- **Glauce (the princess):** Daughter of Creon and Jason's new bride. She becomes the target of Medea's revenge. Medea sends her a poisoned crown and robe, which burst into flames as soon as she wears them, killing her in agony. She represents female rivalry and the focal point of Medea's humiliation.
- **Chorus (the women of Corinth):** Composed of Corinthian women, the chorus witnesses Medea's sorrow, anger, and revenge. Sometimes they express sympathy, at other times fear. They serve as the voice of ordinary people and moral judgment in the play.

Minor Characters in Medea by Euripides

- **Nurse:** Medea's old servant. She is the first to present Medea's grief and anger before the audience. She tries to dissuade Medea from seeking revenge. The Nurse symbolizes

humanity and warning in the play.

- **Tutor:** Guardian of Jason and Medea's children. He carries messages about the children's fate and ultimately their tragic deaths.
- **Children:** The two sons of Jason and Medea. Though innocent, they become victims of political and familial revenge, murdered by their own mother.
- **Aegeus (King of Athens):** Meets Medea midway through the play. Medea promises to cure his childlessness. In return, Aegeus vows to provide her refuge in Athens. He becomes the means of Medea's future escape.
- **Messenger:** Describes the horrifying deaths of Glauce and Creon. His vivid report heightens the dramatic tension of the play.
- **Helios (the Sun God):** Medea's grandfather. Though he does not appear directly in the play, his divine power protects Medea. At the end, she escapes in the chariot of the Sun sent by Helios. He symbolizes divine assistance and Medea's invincible strength.
- **Aeëtes (King of Colchis):** Medea's father and son of Helios. When Medea falls in love with Jason, she betrays her father by helping Jason steal the Golden Fleece.
- **Idyia:** Medea's mother, daughter of Oceanus (in some sources, her name is given as Perseis).
- **Absyrtus / Apsyrtus:** Medea's brother. In some versions, Medea kills him herself while fleeing with Jason; in others, she aids Jason in murdering him. His death first reveals Medea's ruthless side.
- **Aeson:** Jason's father and the rightful king of Iolcus. Out of fear of Pelias, Jason was sent away from him as a child.
- **Alcimedea:** Jason's mother (in some sources called Polymede).
- **Pelias:** Jason's uncle (half-brother of Aeson). He usurped Aeson's throne and became king of Iolcus. Pelias is the one who sent Jason on the quest for the Golden Fleece, hoping Jason would perish on the dangerous journey.
- **Servants/Attendants:** Various slaves of Medea and the royal palace. They make the setting realistic and reveal Medea's inner world and preparations for events.
- **Glauce's Maid/Attendant:** Delivers Medea's fatal gifts to Glauce. Later, she witnesses Glauce's horrifying death and retells it to the audience, serving as a witness-character who reconstructs the dreadful scene.

Couples and Connections

- **Medea and Jason:** The central couple. Their relationship falls from love into betrayal and vengeance, ending in terrible destruction.
- **Jason and Glauce:** A relationship driven by political ambition. It ends in horrifying death through Medea's revenge.
- **Medea and Children:** A complex bond of motherhood. By murdering her own sons as part of her revenge, Medea breaks the traditional boundaries of motherhood.

Family and Kinship

- **House of Colchis:** Medea belongs to this royal family. She is the daughter of King Aeëtes and a descendant of the sun-god Helios.
- **House of Corinth:** Represented by Creon and Glauce. This family is destroyed through Medea's revenge.
- **Argonauts:** The band of heroes who sailed with Jason on his voyage. They form an important background to Medea's myth and the play's context.