

# **The Medea Complex**

A play in One Act

By Patricia Crespín

Draft 9

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## Cast of Characters

Medea...A Mexican woman. 25 years old. Beautiful, dark, stunning.

Gertrude...An aging Mexican American Woman. 48 years old. Once an award winning journalist.

Jason...A Spanish Conquistador/gangster. 35 years old.

Tita...The guard in Death Row. A ooky Mexican American woman with a sense of humor.

Guitarrista...The musician that lives inside Medea's head. He/She only plays Cuco Sanchez songs.

SETTING:

Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Harris County, Texas. Women's Facility. Death Row.

AT RISE:

The stage is separated into two parts. On stage right is an interview room. There is a table and two chairs set in the center of the room. A lamp, bright and piercing hangs from the Ceiling above. On stage left is a bed Covered with red silk sheets, and a window with red silk drapes. Separating the two worlds is the center of *Medéa's* mind. Upstage is the long, dark, concrete Hallway of Death Row.

*Blackout. The sound of a prison door slamming shut.*

*Lights rise on the hallway.*

*GERTRUDE is walking down the dark hallway of Death Row. TITA, the guard walks in front of her whistling the tune to "La Cama De Piedra".*

TITA

You got a lot of balls coming here to hell's waiting room. Only the toughest of the tough can hang in this *pinta*.

GERTRUDE

Well, I didn't really have much choice. Someone has to get *Medéa's* story before she dies and she chose me.

TITA

Shit, I got some stories, *comadre*. Real horror stories! If you want I can give you my number.

GERTRUDE

Maybe some other time.

*They arrive at the interview room. TITA pulls out a ring of keys and searches for the right one.*

TITA

Have you ever wondered what it would feel like to take someone's life that wasn't yours to take?

GERTRUDE

I haven't really thought about it.

TITA

It's not as cool as some of those *pinche asesinos* make it out to be. It's real spooky.

*TITA finds the right key and opens the door, letting GERTRUDE enter first. TITA Enters behind her, then locks the door.*

GERTRUDE

She's not here.

TITA

I have to go get her.

*TITA walks slowly towards GERTRUDE, fondling her night stick, ever so slightly.*

GERTRUDE

What are you doing?

TITA

You know this job is hard *Chica*. I've worked in this prison for six years and I've seen things I wished I'd never seen. A lot of shit goes down behind these concrete walls. Shit we're not even supposed to talk about! They give us counselors and priests and bonuses and shit like that but it's not enough to take away the nightmares, you know what I mean?

*By this time, TITA has backed GERTRUDE into the table and is leaning in real close.*

GERTRUDE

Why don't I give you my card? You can call me sometime...and we can talk.

TITA

If you insist.

*GERTRUDE pulls a card from her suit pocket and hands it to TITA.*

TITA

*¡Orale!* You're pretty *chingón, comadre!* Wait here. I'll go get the ghost.

GERTRUDE

The ghost? You call *Medéa* a ghost?

TITA

We call all the *chicas* here on death row ghosts.

GERTRUDE

That's a little cruel, isn't it?

TITA

*Pues no. ¡Ya están muertos!*

*TITA laughs as she exits the room and walks back down the hall, whistling. GERTRUDE studies the bare room as if it were filled with the most detailed paintings. She finally sits. After a brief few seconds, she pulls out a recorder from her pocket and presses the button.*

GERTRUDE

Testing...one, two, three.

*She stops the recorder and rewinds. She presses play. Satisfied that it's working, she puts it back into her pocket and returns to quiet. She gets an idea and sits up straight looking towards the other chair as if someone were sitting in it.*

GERTRUDE

*Medéa, I'd like to ask you the question that has been on everyone's mind since that fateful night...Señora Medéa, ahora quiero preguntarte una question...no English. No English. Come on Gertrude. This isn't a contest. Just be yourself.*

*She adjusts in the seat and regains composure.*

GERTRUDE

*Medéa...where is Jason?*

*A prison door slams shut, echoing through the room. MEDEA appears at the beginning of the hallway. She is wearing handcuffs and a dark prison uniform that resembles hospital scrubs. She wears sneakers with no laces. TITA stands in front of her, fondling her night stick.*

*As they begin to walk the dark hallway, the GUITARRISTA appears in the center of the two Worlds. She begins to play "San Marqueña".*

*GERTRUDE, hearing the door slam, stands and waits. As TITA and MEDEA arrive at the interview room. TITA fumbles with the keys as usual. She finds the right one and opens the door slowly, letting MEDEA enter first.*

*GERTRUDE is taken aback by MEDEA'S beauty. She takes a few steps back as MEDEA Enters the room. The GUITARRISTA continues to play a soft instrumental.*

TITA

Are you okay, *comadre*?

GERTRUDE

I'm fine.

TITA

Cuz you look like you just seen a ghost!

*TITA and MEDEA share a laugh at TITA'S joke.*

GERTRUDE

I think I stood up too fast.

*She regains her composure and holds out her hand. TITA slams the door shut and locks it.*

GERTRUDE

*Medéa*, Nice to meet you. My name is Gertrude. Gertrude Hernandez.

*MEDEA drops the cigarette to the floor and puts it out with her foot. Then she holds up her hands, indicating her handcuffs.*

GERTRUDE

Sorry. Guard, can you take those handcuffs off, please.

*TITA removes MEDEA'S handcuffs.*

GERTRUDE

Would you like to sit down?

*MEDEA sits. TITA stands by the door at ease and puts her hand to her night stick.*

GERTRUDE

*(To TITA)*

I'm sorry. I was under the impression that I would be allowed a private visit.

TITA

*¡Chhh...orale!* Ain't nothing private in this *pinche* waiting room!

*Beat.*

TITA

*¡Bueno!* You got one hour! I suggest you make the most of it. It's the last one you're ever gonna get.

*TITA exits, slamming the door behind her. The GUITARRISTA picks up the volume and Begins singing again. GERTRUDE moves to the empty chair.*

GERTRUDE

Okay, let's get started.

MEDEA

Is the music too loud for you?

GERTRUDE

Excuse me?

MEDEA

*¡La música!* Is it too loud for you? I could ask my *guitarrista* to turn it down if you'd like.

*GERTRUDE looks confused, then concerned.*

GERTRUDE

I think its fine. Not too loud at all.

*MEDEA indicates with her finger for GERTRUDE to come close. The GUITARRISTA stops Playing.*

*MEDEA whispers to GERTRUDE.*

MEDEA

I know you can't hear the music, *Gertrudis*. It's in my head.

GERTRUDE

Right. Of course it is. Very funny.

MEDEA

Do you really think that's funny?

GERTRUDE

I was being sarcastic.

MEDEA

Don't worry *Gertrudis*, I'm not *loca*.

GERTRUDE

Not even a little bit?

MEDEA

My lawyers wanted me to say I was crazy.

GERTRUDE

They were trying to give you a good defense.

MEDEA

I wouldn't let them.

GERTRUDE

Why wouldn't you let them? It might have saved your life.

*GERTRUDE pulls out the recorder from her pocket and presses record.*

MEDEA

Turn that off.

GERTRUDE

It's just a recorder...so I don't forget anything.

MEDEA

*¡Apagúelo!*

*GERTRUDE turns off the recorder and returns it to her pocket.*

GERTRUDE

Okay. It's gone.

*She starts to take a pad from her purse.*

GERTRUDE

Can I take notes, at least?

*MEDEA stares at her.*

GERTRUDE

Okay. No notes.

MEDEA

*Gracias, Gertrudis.*

GERTRUDE

No one has called me that name for a long time.

MEDEA

Why not? It sounds so much prettier than Gertrude. Gertrude sounds...uptight.

GERTRUDE

It's easier for people to say than *Gertrudis*.

MEDEA

I guess if you're dealing with *gringos* then, yes, it is easier.

GERTRUDE

I'm a journalist, *Medéa*, I deal with all sorts of ethnicities and they all have trouble saying it.

MEDEA

You find it easier to call yourself Gertrude *Hernandez*?

GERTRUDE

Yes.

MEDEA

I'd rather call you *Gertrudis*.

GERTRUDE

Fine.

*MEDEA pulls a pack of cigarettes from her shirt pocket and grabs one.*

GERTRUDE

Well, like the guard said, we only have an hour so I'd-

MEDEA

Her name is Tita.

GERTRUDE

Right. Tita, I forgot her name.

MEDEA

I think it's sad when people are called by their occupation rather than the name their *mama's* gave them. For example, when a person says, excuse me, waitress. They are indicating to the woman serving their food that they have no interest in knowing who she is or what her name is. If people would take the time to know each other, call each other by name, maybe there wouldn't be so much anger, so much...death.

GERTRUDE

I won't forget her name again.

MEDEA

Good. Do you have a light?

GERTRUDE

A light? I don't think so.

MEDEA

Can you check?

*GERTRUDE grabs her purse and fumbles through it.*

GERTRUDE

I usually carry one but I think they took it up front.

*She pulls the lighter from her purse.*

GERTRUDE

Wait, no they didn't. I could have sworn I saw them take it.

MEDEA

Would you like a cigarette?

GERTRUDE

No thank you. I don't smoke.

MEDEA

You carry a lighter, but you don't smoke?

GERTRUDE

I used to. My husband gave it to me a long time ago. It was his way of asking me to quit.

*GERTRUDE hands the lighter to MEDEA. It is a fancy, silver Zippo with an inscription on it. MEDEA lights her cigarette then reads the inscription.*

MEDEA

*Para el amor de mi vida. Te quiero.* That's really sweet. Here you go.

*GERTRUDE takes the lighter and sets it on the table.*

MEDEA

How long have you been married?

GERTRUDE

I thought I was supposed to be asking the questions.

MEDEA

I'm only trying to loosen things up. You don't mind do you?

GERTRUDE

Twenty eight years.

MEDEA

That's a long time.

GERTRUDE

Yes, it is.

MEDEA  
*¿Tienes hijos?*

GERTRUDE  
No. I don't have any kids.

MEDEA  
No?

GERTRUDE  
No.

*Beat.*

MEDEA  
*¿Porqué estás nerviosa, Gertrudis?*

GERTRUDE  
I'm not nervous. Not at all.

MEDEA  
Are you sure?

GERTRUDE  
Yes, I'm sure.

MEDEA  
Are you attracted to me?

GERTRUDE  
No. I'm not. Why would you ask something like that?

MEDEA  
Do you think I'm beautiful?

GERTRUDE  
I'm sure you don't need me to answer that question.

MEDEA  
No. I'm just trying to figure out why you're so nervous.

GERTRUDE  
*Medéa*, let's talk about the night of the murders.

MEDEA  
You're not afraid of me are you?

GERTRUDE

Absolutely not! I have nothing to be afraid of.

MEDEA

I am a murderer, you know?

GERTRUDE

You're not going to play that game with me are you?

MEDEA

I'm not playing any games. I never play games.

GERTRUDE

I find that very hard to believe.

MEDEA

*Es la verdad.*

GERTRUDE

Okay, fine. Why don't you start by telling me what you were doing at the Garduños house on the night of the murders?

MEDEA

I went to get my babies. I had to protect them.

GERTRUDE

Protect them? From what?

MEDEA

From that hell they were living in.

GERTRUDE

I don't understand.

MEDEA

Hell. Fire. Damnation. *El Diablo*. Hell!

GERTRUDE

I don't understand how were you protecting them? You killed them.

MEDEA

A lot of females kill their young. To protect them.

GERTRUDE

Animals do that, not people.

MEDEA

We are animals, *Gertrudis*. Make no mistake about that. We may hide behind words and manners. But we are all animals.

GERTRUDE

What about the Garduño's? You weren't protecting them.

MEDEA

They owed me their lives.

GERTRUDE

Why?

MEDEA

They tried to take what was mine.

GERTRUDE

They opened their home to Jason and your daughters.

MEDEA

Yes. They did. But they were evil.

GERTRUDE

Evil? In what way?

MEDEA

In the worst possible way a human can be.

GERTRUDE

So you decided to play judge, jury and executioner?

MEDEA

I'm getting bored with this conversation. Don't you have something more interesting up your sleeve?

GERTRUDE

I'm just trying to get the facts of the story.

MEDEA

You are so full of shit.

GERTRUDE

Pardon me?

MEDEA

One of the reasons I brought you here, *Señora Hernández*, is because I believe you are an honest woman. Don't start off on the wrong leg by lying to me.

GERTRUDE

It's foot. Don't start off on the wrong foot.

*A few beats. MEDEA waits for the truth.*

GERTRUDE

Okay. Where's Jason?

MEDEA

Ah...Jason. Jason, Jason...Jason...he is a missing piece of the puzzle isn't he?

GERTRUDE

I would like to know what happened to him.

MEDEA

Of course you would. You all want to know what happened to Jason. Plague carriers.

GERTRUDE

I beg your pardon?

MEDEA

That's what I like to call the media, plague carriers. You get off on writing stories that exploit people's misery and pain.

GERTRUDE

I don't do this to hurt anyone.

MEDEA

Then why do you do it?

GERTRUDE

The people have a right to the truth.

MEDEA

But a person can never really tell the truth, can they?

GERTRUDE

Yes, they can. Of course they can.

MEDEA

Bullshit.

GERTRUDE

No, it's not. If a person really wanted to tell the truth they would.

MEDEA

Why are you here?

GERTRUDE

You asked me to come here.

MEDEA

Why are you here?

GERTRUDE

I have an obligation to tell the truth about what happened that night.

MEDEA

Why are you here?!

GERTRUDE

I don't know what you want me to say!

MEDEA

*¡La verdad!*

GERTRUDE

I have consumed myself with your story for five years! Okay? I don't eat. I don't sleep! I don't even have sex with my husband anymore! I'm this close (*she indicates with her fingers*) to losing my marriage, my sanity, but I can't think of anything else. I want to know what happened to you that night. I want to know where Jason is! I want to know how you could do something so horrible.

MEDEA

You see? *La verdad*. Now we can talk.

*MEDEA pulls a cigarette out of the pack.*

MEDEA

May I have a light?

*GERTRUDE holds out the lighter.*

MEDEA

Light it for me.

*GERTRUDE lights MEDEA'S cigarette. MEDEA subtly caresses GERTRUDE'S hand. GERTRUDE pulls away, embarrassed.*

GERTRUDE

Can we continue?

MEDEA

*Sí.*

GERTRUDE

You went to Mexico after the murders. Jason was last seen at the border in El Paso then he just disappeared without a trace.

MEDEA

He didn't disappear. Jason is eternal. Our love is eternal.

GERTRUDE

Did he follow you into Mexico?

MEDEA

Jason wanted lots of things. Money. Wealth. Power. He couldn't exist without them.

GERTRUDE

Is that why he left you for Chavela Garduño?

MEDEA

He didn't leave me. Jason loved me more than he loved himself. He wanted that *putas* money. He wanted the power being married to her could give.

GERTRUDE

Something you couldn't give him.

MEDEA

I gave him everything he needed. When I found him he was sleeping on a bed of rocks! By the time we left *México*, he had money and a car and a job waiting for him in this godforsaken country.

GERTRUDE

But he wanted more. It made sense that he would make the move with Chavela. He was her father's right hand man.

MEDEA

I introduced them.

GERTRUDE

Garduño didn't have any sons so... Jason was a good candidate to take over the family business when the old man retired.

MEDEA

He would still be in that stinking boat he took to *México* if I hadn't helped him.

GERTRUDE

He really didn't have a choice, did he? At least that's what he thought. And there was nothing you could do to stop him. You weren't even legally married to him. He left you and took your kids with him. My god, you must have been angry. I would have been.

MEDEA

Are you fucking deaf? I said he didn't leave me.

GERTRUDE

Jason found you in Mexico, didn't he? What happened there?

MEDEA

All hell broke loose.

*The lights go down in the interview room. MEDEA walks through her inner world. She turns back and smiles at GERTRUDE who is sitting silently watching MEDEA. The lights come up in the inner world, portraying the inside of MEDEA'S mind. The GUITARRISTA starts to play "Anillo de Compromiso" as MEDEA strips off her jail clothes seductively, revealing a black teddy. As she moves slowly through her inner world she plays with The GUITARRISTA, touching her, caressing her guitar. She arrives to the room in Mexico and lies down on the bed.*

*End Scene.*

Scene 2

*Lights come up slowly. It is just before sunrise. The ocean crashes in the background. MEDEA is in bed watching the sun come up through the window. The GUITARRISTA is still playing, “Anillo de Compromiso” softly. The whole mood is soft and serene.*

*JASON, a very handsome Spanish man dressed like a contemporary Conquistador enters the room and moves stealthily towards the bed as if he were a jaguar ready to pounce on his prey. He has a long, shiny hunting knife in his hand. As he approaches MEDEA he raises the knife up above his head.*

*The guitar shifts to a whisper soft instrumental .*

MEDEA

I know you're there Jason. I can smell you.

*She stretches like a cat.*

MEDEA

Mmmm...I love that smell.

*She rolls over and looks at him.*

MEDEA

That's a big knife you have there. Is that for me?

*He stares at her, still holding the knife above his head.*

MEDEA

God, I've missed you.

JASON

Shut up!

*The strains of the last few months are visible in his appearance and his demeanor.*

MEDEA

Why don't you put that big shiny knife down and talk to me?

JASON

I didn't come here to talk.

MEDEA

Of course you did.

JASON

I want your blood.

MEDEA

Well, before there can be any bloodshed we need to talk. Now put the knife down. I can't concentrate with that thing pointing at me.

JASON

I have nothing to say to you.

MEDEA

No? I find that very hard to believe.

JASON

I want you dead!

MEDEA

You didn't come all this way just to kill me. You're in pain, Jason. Let me help you.

JASON

Don't move!

MEDEA

Jason...

*She starts to go to him. He holds the knife towards her.*

JASON

Don't come any closer. *Te juro de Dios...*

MEDEA

*Bueno, I'll stay away. I can understand how you feel about me. Pero necesitamos hablar.*

JASON

What can you possibly say to me that would change how I feel about you?

MEDEA

I've hurt you. I know that, but you have to listen to me Jason.

JASON

I have to kill you. I have to rid the world of your *pinche maldición!*

MEDEA

Is that what you think of me now? A curse? I brought you to life! You would have nothing if it weren't for me!

JASON

I have nothing because of you! You took everything away from me *Medéa*, and now you have to pay for what you've done.

MEDEA

I wonder what hurts you more, the fact that I killed your rich *puta* and her pig of a father or the fact that I killed your two innocent daughters.

JASON

*¡Diabla!*

*JASON swings the knife at MEDEA.*

MEDEA

Oohh! Big bad *hombre* with a knife. Careful. You might hurt somebody with that thing.

*Beat.*

MEDEA

Come on, Jason, put the knife down. I love you. I've been miserable without you.

*Beat.*

MEDEA

Don't you grieve for our daughters?

JASON

How can you say that? You're the one that murdered them!

MEDEA

I did what I had to do for them. I had to fix what you ruined.

JASON

How could you kill your own children?!

MEDEA

I have my reasons.

JASON

You were jealous! You couldn't stand to let me be with anyone else.

MEDEA

You made a promise to me Jason! You gave me a ring! *¡Una cadena de nuestra amor!*

JASON

You knew why I went to her.

MEDEA

*Ah, sí. Por el dinero.* You married that *puta* for her money.

JASON

I did it for us!

MEDEA

*¡Mentiras!* Nothing you ever did was for anyone but yourself.

JASON

I did it for our daughters. The daughters you murdered! Where's your grief? Where's your pain for the lives you took?!

MEDEA

I feel nothing for that *puta* and her *pinche* father. But my *hijas*, I will always love them. I will always be with them.

JASON

They're dead!

MEDEA

*Sí*, but they are with the gods. *Están en cielo* and I will see them again.

JASON

Heaven?

*He laughs his maniacal laugh again.*

JASON

There is no heaven. And there is no God! There is only the devil and she is standing right in front of me.

MEDEA

Don't curse the gods, Jason. You might anger them.

JASON

I must have angered the gods a long time ago, *Medéa!* Don't you think? I'm cursed!

MEDEA

Your greed is your curse.

*JASON lowers the knife.*

JASON

I came here for vengeance. But you're right. I have questions. I need them answered before you die.

*HE places the knife in the holster at his side.*

MEDEA

I need answers too.

JASON

It isn't about you this time. You're going to tell me why you went *loca* and then I'm going to slit your throat. End of story.

MEDEA

Our story will never end. It was written for us long ago.

JASON

Don't start with your crazy witchcraft.

MEDEA

I deserve some answers too!

JASON

I guess you're going to have to go to your grave without them.

MEDEA

Without knowing how you could leave me for that *puta*?

JASON

Don't call her that.

MEDEA

Why not? That's what she is! Or should I say was?

JASON

You cold hearted bitch. Chavela was a good person.

MEDEA

She was a whore. She deserved everything she got.

JASON

She was innocent!

MEDEA

Wake up Jason! It's time to see your in-laws for the *cerdos* they were!

JASON

Damnit, *Medéa!* It was just business! You fucked everything up with the Garduño's and now my daughters are dead because of it!

MEDEA

You take no responsibility for anything?

JASON

You didn't have to hurt them. You knew I would come back to you every chance I got.

MEDEA

You wanted to make *me* your *puta*?

JASON

I couldn't stay away from you even if I wanted to!

MEDEA

Because you love me.

JASON

You made me think I loved you. You cast a spell on me! You're a *bruja!*

MEDEA

I didn't cast a spell, Jason. The gods put us together. I knew you were coming ever since I was a little girl. It is our destiny!

JASON

It was *my* destiny to be a rich man! I had everything I ever wanted in the palm of my hand and you took it away from me!

MEDEA

Did you fuck her?

JASON

Don't ask me that.

MEDEA

¿*Porque?* Did you?

JASON

You know I did.

MEDEA

Was she good?

JASON

Yes, she was. She was very good. She had a nice, tight pussy.

*MEDEA jumps off the bed and onto JASON'S back. She claws at his face scratching him everywhere. The GUITARRISTA starts to play "No Soy Monedita de Oro".*

JASON

Ow, get off of me you crazy bitch! Get off!  
Stop it, Medea...Get off of me! I'll kill you!  
Agh!.....  
Medea, Crazy woman!

MEDEA

You son of a bitch! How dare you  
leave me? There's no one like me!  
There will never be anyone like me.  
Never!

*She bites his ear.*

JASON

Ow! ¡Cabrona!

*He throws her to the ground and puts his foot to her throat, cutting off her circulation. She struggles to breath. The GUITARRISTA stops playing.*

JASON

I could kill you right now and everyone would praise me for it.

MEDEA

You don't have the balls to kill me.

*He pushes even harder with his foot until she is almost out of breath.*

JASON

I'm going to take great pleasure in killing you.

*He gives one more push and lets her go.*

JASON

But we have some unfinished business, don't we? You have one hour. Tell me why you killed our daughters.

*The lights fade in the hacienda and rise in the inner world. The GUITARRISTA plays a soft instrumental of "Anillo de Compromiso". MEDEA enters the inner world and puts her jail uniform back on all the while communicating verbally and non verbally with her GUITARRISTA. When she is dressed she turns to GERTRUDE.*

MEDEA

Can you hear me, Gertrudis?

GERTRUDE

Yes.

MEDEA

Put out your hands.

*She puts out her hands.*

MEDEA

Feel this.

*She blows from her hand towards GERTRUDE. She falls to the floor and clutches her chest in pain.*

*End scene.*

Scene 3

*GERTRUDE lies on the floor in pain. MEDEA enters the interview room and lights rise.*

MEDEA

Are you okay?

GERTRUDE

What did you do to me?

MEDEA

I didn't do anything to you.

*MEDEA holds out her hand. GERTRUDE refuses it. The pain is gone.*

GERTRUDE

My chest. It was hurting...like a heart attack. Now it's gone.

*GERTRUDE rises and sits back down, furious.*

MEDEA

Maybe you should get that checked out.

GERTRUDE

You did something to me!

MEDEA

No, I didn't.

GERTRUDE

Was Jason right? Are you a witch?

MEDEA

I am not a *bruja*. I am more like a *curandera*. I have healing powers.

*Beat.*

MEDEA

Why are you looking at me like that?

GERTRUDE

*Maldita.*

MEDEA

So you do speak Spanish.

GERTRUDE

Everything you have told me up to now points to the fact that you were jealous of Chavela! You were furious that Jason would go to another woman, especially one who isn't nearly as *guapa* as you are. Is that what I'm hearing? That you killed your two young daughters and two other innocent people because you were jealous? Please tell me I'm wrong.

MEDEA

You're wrong.

GERTRUDE

Elaborate.

MEDEA

Do you actually think a woman as powerful as I am is capable of being so petty? My actions were fueled by much more than jealousy, *Señora*. So much more.

*MEDEA grabs a cigarette.*

GERTRUDE

Well, you brought me here. So tell me. What fueled your actions?

MEDEA

Give me a light.

*GERTRUDE holds out her lighter to MEDEA.*

MEDEA

Light it for me.

*GERTRUDE holds out the flame and MEDEA takes a long drag, letting the smoke out slowly.*

MEDEA

I think I want to talk about you again, *Gertrudis*.

GERTRUDE

I'm not here to talk about me.

MEDEA

I think it's only fair that we take turns sharing our personal life stories. You're acting a little too...self righteous. I need to bring you back to my level.

GERTRUDE

This isn't about me. For once, it's about you, *Medéa*.

MEDEA

What does your husband think of this obsession you have with me?

GERTRUDE

I am not obsessed with you.

MEDEA

I believe the word you used was consumed. You're so consumed with me that you don't even have sex with your husband anymore. That is what you said, isn't it?

GERTRUDE

I'm a journalist. I love my work. Your story was...is very important. To everyone!

MEDEA

No, I think it's more than that. You're not just obsessed with my story, you're obsessed with me.

GERTRUDE

Don't be ridiculous.

MEDEA

But...why? Are you physically attracted to me? I know you think I'm beautiful. Do you secretly fantasize about what it would be like to make love to me?

GERTRUDE

I'm not a lesbian!

MEDEA

So? That's never stopped anyone before.

GERTRUDE

You think you're so cute, don't you?

MEDEA

Don't you?

GERTRUDE

You want to know the truth?

MEDEA

*Sí. Siempre.*

GERTRUDE

The truth is, you make me sick. I would rather eat nails than touch you.

MEDEA

You wouldn't fuck me if you had the chance?

GERTRUDE

No!

MEDEA

Then why are you so obsessed with me?

GERTRUDE

Why does everything have to be about sex with you?

MEDEA

That's all I've ever known. That's all anyone has ever wanted from me.

GERTRUDE

Well, you can relax. I don't want that from you. I want your story. Nothing more.

MEDEA

What's in it for you?

GERTRUDE

Answers! I need answers! For the life of me I can't figure out how a woman like you could commit such a heinous crime against her own children!

MEDEA

What did you say?

GERTRUDE

You heard me.

MEDEA

Did you just say heinous?

GERTRUDE

Yes!

MEDEA

Why are you saying such a fucked up word? That is the stupidest word I've ever heard! Listen to it, *HAY-nous!* It sounds like the crack in someone's ass. Where did that word come from, the *gringos*? Only the *gringos* could come up with such a stupid word.

GERTRUDE

It's Anglo French. It's a derivative of the word heine. To hate!

MEDEA

¿Sí? Well, I'm going to have to ask that you never use that word in my presence again.

*GERTRUDE stands and grabs her bag.*

GERTRUDE

Obviously I've made a mistake coming here. You have no intention of talking to me.

MEDEA

Sit down, *Gertrudis!*

*Beat.*

MEDEA

I'm not finished.

GERTRUDE

Did I come here for an interview or not?

MEDEA

Yes.

GERTRUDE

Then let's get something straight. I am a serious journalist. I have won countless awards for excellence in journalism and I am here to do a story on you. A story you called me here to get! I am not some hard up man with his dick sticking up between his legs that you can manipulate and play games with as you please. If I'm going to stay here then I expect you to get serious about the rest of the time we have together and tell me what I came here to find out.

MEDEA

*Bueno. Have a seat, Gertrudis.*

*GERTRUDE sits. The women stare each other down for a moment.*

GERTRUDE

Well?

MEDEA

I'm waiting for you to ask me a question.

*Beat.*

GERTRUDE

If it wasn't jealousy that pushed you over the edge, what was it?

*MEDEA takes a pause or a long drag on her cigarette.*

MEDEA

Do you believe it's true that a mother must do whatever it takes to protect her young?

GERTRUDE

Yes. Of course.

*The GUITARRISTA picks up her guitar and strums a light instrumental of “Anoche Estuve Llorando”.*

MEDEA

When I was nine years old *mí mamá* told me that I would take the lives of my two daughters. She told me one day out of the blue as if she were telling me the corn was yellow. And then she slapped me real hard to make sure I remembered what she said. I was shocked. I didn't want to believe it but she was very serious. I yelled and screamed at the top of my lungs and called her an evil witch for saying such horrible things to her only daughter. Then I attacked her. I scratched and clawed, but it didn't upset her. She waited patiently for me to calm down. Then she grabbed my arm and took me to the river. We sat at a spot where the water was calm and clear and she showed me my destiny. She showed me Jason on his way to *México*. She showed me his greed and my jealousy. She showed me the mountains of the *Sandias* where Jason would take me to live. And she showed me the evil man and woman that would destroy *mí familia*. Then she showed me my beautiful *hijas*. They were so beautiful. They looked just like me. That night I cried and begged the gods to have mercy on me and spare me my destiny. But the gods were not listening. The next morning I was sold as a slave to a gang of *Indios* that ran drugs and prostitutes. I spent eight years with those *Indios*, cooking, cleaning, fucking.

*GERTRUDE gives her a look of disbelief.*

MEDEA

Not willingly, *Gertrudis*. *Ay Dios*, you don't think very highly of me do you? I was forced to have sex. The cooking and cleaning I didn't mind so much. It kept me busy or else I would have lost my mind.

GERTRUDE

It must have been horrible for you.

*The GUITARRISTA stops playing.*

MEDEA

Why do you talk like that?

GERTRUDE

Like what?

MEDEA

Like you think you're better than me.

GERTRUDE

I'm not...I don't think that.

MEDEA

Do you have any idea the power I have given you by bringing you here today? There are thousands of writers who would kill to be in your shoes right now.

GERTRUDE

And just like them, I'm trying to uncover the mystery that has followed you around like a disease since you committed those murders.

MEDEA

It's a hell of a story, right?

GERTRUDE

Yes, it is.

MEDEA

You didn't come here for answers you came here to persecute me. You want to talk to me about judge, jury and executioner? You decided I was guilty the minute you heard my name.

GERTRUDE

That's not true.

MEDEA

No?

GERTRUDE

No.

MEDEA

*Gertrudis*, you're lying to me again!

GERTRUDE

You murdered your own children! It's very difficult not to form an opinion.

MEDEA

Yes, it is difficult isn't it? But destiny is a tricky thing. You end up doing what it wants you to do even if you try not to.

GERTRUDE

It wasn't destiny that influenced a naïve young girl to believe she would become a murderer. Nor was it destiny that turned that nine year old girl into a piece of meat. It was your mother.

MEDEA

Don't you believe in destiny, *Gertrudis*?

GERTRUDE

Destiny is an excuse or a reason to justify what's wrong with the world. The truth is that bad things happen to good people and destiny doesn't have a damn thing to do with it.

MEDEA

It's very disappointing to hear you say that. I thought you were a true *Mexicana*.

GERTRUDE

How dare you? I am a true *Mexicana*!

MEDEA

Then you should believe in destiny. All *Mexicanos* do. Let me elaborate. *Malinali* is a perfect example of destiny fulfilled. She was born a princess. She was supposed to have a comfortable life. But that wasn't her destiny. Instead, she was sold into slavery by her mother to the Mayan people and learned to speak their language. She was sold again to the Spanish. To *Hernán Cortés*. She became his interpreter and his lover and gave him a son. He was the very first Mestizo. Now tell me that is not destiny.

GERTRUDE

Many people believe that *Malinali* or *Malinche* betrayed her people by becoming *Cortés*' lover.

MEDEA

She didn't betray anyone!

GERTRUDE

I'm not saying I agree with them.

MEDEA

*Malinali* was a hero. If it wasn't for her a lot more people would have died at the hands of the Spanish. She was responsible for creating the entire Mexican race!

*Beat.*

GERTRUDE

You are not *Malinali*, *Medea*.

MEDEA

*Sí, soy*. I am her. I am all of them. *Malinali*, *La Llorona*, *La Virgen*. They are all a part of me and I'm a part of them.

GERTRUDE

Oh! Now you're comparing yourself to *La Virgen*?! *La Llorona*, yes but the Virgin Mary didn't murder her son.

MEDEA

No, but she sacrificed him for the sake of the people.

GERTRUDE

Now you saying that you sacrificed your children and the Garduños for the sake of the people?

MEDEA

Yes.

GERTRUDE

You're not making any sense!

MEDEA

Open your ears, *Gertrudis!* Open your eyes! Open your heart! Not everything in life has to be seen or heard. You have to work to find the truth! There's a whole other layer out there waiting to be touched. Let yourself feel it. Let it move through your body. Let it enter your soul. You might learn something.

GERTRUDE

Did you tell Jason this story?

*She grabs a cigarette.*

MEDEA

Give me a light.

*GERTRUDE pulls out the lighter and lights MEDEA'S cigarette. She takes a long drag.*

GERTRUDE

*Medea?* What did you tell Jason about your daughters?

MEDEA

I told him I had to kill them to save them.

*MEDEA exits the interview room and makes her transformation through the inner world. The lights adjust with her. The GUITARRISTA plays "Anoche Estuve Llorando" as MEDEA removes her jail clothes and gestures to The GUITARRISTA. They exchange silent words.*

*End Scene.*

Scene 4

*At the hacienda she goes to the bed and sits down as JASON watches her, on guard and ready for any attacks. The GUITARRISTA takes the song to a soft instrumental.*

MEDEA  
Are you hurt?

JASON  
You practically bit my ear off.

MEDEA  
Let me have a look at it.

JASON  
Stay on the bed where I can see you.

MEDEA  
Please let me help you.

JASON  
No.

MEDEA  
I'm still the same *Medéa!*

JASON  
*Sí.* The same deceitful bitch who was giving her body away to disgusting old men when I met her.

*MEDEA walks to JASON and slaps him.*

JASON  
Ah, that felt good.

MEDEA  
Fuck you.

JASON  
I'll never fuck you again.

MEDEA  
Yes you will.

JASON  
Start talking, *Medéa.*

MEDEA  
What do you want me to say?

JASON  
I want to know everything that happened.

MEDEA  
Believe me Jason. *Tu no quiere saber.*

JASON  
If you wanted revenge, why didn't you come to me?

MEDEA  
I wasn't after revenge!

JASON  
What were you after?

MEDEA  
I was protecting my children as any mother would.

JASON  
Protecting them from what?

MEDEA  
From the monsters, Jason! *¡Los monstruos!* You thought you were the king of the world when you married that *puta, pero* you weren't paying attention! You weren't looking out for our little girls!

JASON  
I was king of the world! And I was going to make my *hijas* the princesses of my world. But you couldn't handle that, could you?

MEDEA  
You were wrong to take them away from me.

JASON  
They wanted to go with me.

MEDEA  
Of course they did. It's what the gods wanted!

JASON  
To hell with the gods!

MEDEA

Jason, stop! You'll ruin everything!

JASON

What more could possibly be ruined? I've lost everything.

MEDEA

You have me.

JASON

I have nothing.

*Beat.*

JASON

Why did you take the girls to *El Paso*?

MEDEA

I wanted to bring them back to *Mexico*. I wanted them close to me.

JASON

Did they cry? Did they ask for their daddy?

MEDEA

Don't do this to yourself, Jason.

JASON

I have to know everything that happened, everything they said.

MEDEA

It's not a good idea.

JASON

Fuck! Yes, it is!

MEDEA

They were my babies! It was one of the hardest things I'll ever have to do, *mí amor*.

JASON

Don't call me *amor*!

MEDEA

But you are my love!

JASON

No...I'm not. I'm not.

*MEDEA creeps slowly towards JASON.*

MEDEA

Yes, you are.

JASON

You gave life to those girls *Medéa*, didn't that mean anything to you?

MEDEA

Exactly. I gave them life. And it was up to me to take that life from them before somebody else did!

JASON

Why do you keep saying that? Who was going to hurt them? Nobody that's who! Nobody but you! You were jealous! You were jealous that the girls and I could be happy with another woman!

MEDEA

Were you happier with that *puta* than with me?

JASON

Our girls would have been. They would have been taken care of for the rest of their lives.

MEDEA

Our girls or you?

JASON

Our girls! There are certain things a man must do for his family, *Medéa!*

MEDEA

Come on, Jason. We both know that your intentions weren't really as pure as you're making them out to be. You've always been very greedy when it comes to money.

JASON

Money makes the world go around. I've always thought that. It's no secret.

MEDEA

You cared more about the money than you did our daughters!

JASON

We couldn't give them a good life, *Medéa!* No matter how hard we tried we couldn't drag ourselves up from that shit hole life we were living!

MEDEA

Don't say that! We were not shit hole people.

JASON

Yes we were! I couldn't live like that anymore! I couldn't live with being nothing. Don't you see that? I was destined for greatness! I was supposed to be a king!

MEDEA

But you would have been a king, *amor*. With me.

*She moves toward him slowly, sensually. He stares at her with contempt, love, confusion. The GUITARRISTA strums her guitar.*

JASON

What are you doing?

MEDEA

Shhh...

JASON

Stop, *Medéa*. Don't come any closer.

*She approaches him and starts to kiss his neck.*

JASON

Stop...*Medéa*...stop...

MEDEA

I would have given you the world if you had given me more time.

JASON

I didn't have time...

*She whispers in his ear.*

MEDEA

I would have defied the gods to give you what you wanted.

JASON

Stop it!

*He pushes her away.*

MEDEA

Jason! I'm not going to hurt you.

JASON

Stay away from me. You're evil!

MEDEA

Shhh...I just want to see if your ear is okay...

JASON

*Veneno...malavada...*

*MEDEA moves lithely into JASON. The GUITARRISTA plays "Corazon Apasionado" as MEDEA circles him slowly, kissing him everywhere. He finally responds and starts kissing her hard and passionate. GERTRUDE watches from the interview room, mesmerized. JASON breaks the kiss and pulls away, wiping his lips. MEDEA glances over at GERTRUDE and winks then turns back to JASON.*

MEDEA

Jason, look at me.

JASON

You do this to me every time...you cast a spell on me...

MEDEA

*Mírame.*

*She pulls him to her. He struggles briefly.*

MEDEA

Kiss me like you used to.

*They start to kiss, soft and sensuous. Then the kisses become abrupt and harsh. MEDEA pulls away from him. She looks to see GERTRUDE'S reaction. She is trying not to look but can't help herself. Content, MEDEA leaves JASON and begins her transformation back to the interview room. The red light in the inner world becomes piercing. MEDEA changes back into her prison uniform. As she does this she teases The GUITARRISTA, flirting and taunting. The GUITARRISTA responds to her affectionately. She finishes dressing and walks into the interview room with her eyes on GERTRUDE.*

*End scene.*

Scene 5

*MEDEA enters the interview room to find GERTRUDE fuming.*

GERTRUDE

You know what I think?

MEDEA

No, what do you think, *Gertrudis*? Please, dazzle me with your wisdom.

GERTRUDE

I'm right. Jason's right. You were jealous. You were so jealous you murdered for it! You couldn't handle the fact that Jason left you for Chavela. It burned your ass that he found a way to make a better life for himself and his daughters and left you in that shit hole life without your family. That's a hell of a way for a man to treat the mother of his children. You must have been so angry. You must have wanted him to pay dearly for what he did to you. Am I right? Did you feel like killing somebody? Did you feel like killing Chavela and her father because they took Jason away from you? Did you feel like killing your daughters just to hurt Jason? Did you feel like killing Jason?!

*MEDEA gives her a look that could kill.*

GERTRUDE

Well?

MEDEA

Well, what?

GERTRUDE

Did you kill Jason?

MEDEA

I wonder...how you would feel if your husband decided to fuck another woman?

GERTRUDE

We're not talking about me, we're talking about you.

MEDEA

I want to talk about you. Come on, *Gertrudis*, we can compare notes and see which one of us is more jealous.

GERTRUDE

I'm certainly not jealous enough to murder for it.

MEDEA

Oh no? Picture this. You come home late one night from a hard day at the office. You know, working on the *Medéa* case. You think your husband is sound asleep in your bed *pero* no, wait, there is a noise. It's coming from the bedroom. But the light is off. What could that noise be? So you walk to the door and open it. You turn on the light and what do you see? Your dark, handsome *esposo* with some sweet little *Mexicanita* with a tight 20 year old ass sticking straight up in the air. And he's fucking her brains out!

GERTRUDE

You're disgusting.

MEDEA

What would you do, *Gertrudis*? Would you walk away? Shut the light off and let them go about their business?

GERTRUDE

Shut your mouth.

MEDEA

Or would you watch? Hmm? You like that? Do you get off on the idea of watching your husband fuck another woman?

GERTRUDE

Shut up!

MEDEA

Lick her wet pussy.

*GERTRUDE jumps up, furious.*

GERTRUDE

Shut your dirty mouth!

*GERTRUDE gets in MEDEA'S face.*

GERTRUDE

*Cochina*, do you want to know what I think of you? I despise you for what you did to those little girls! It's bad enough what you did to the Garduños chopping them up into pieces. And god only knows what you did to Jason, but what you did to your daughters was the worst thing a mother can do to her child. How could you? How could you take your own flesh and blood and drown them in the river like that? Don't you know that children are god's greatest gift? Don't you know that you were blessed to have those two girls alive and healthy?! I'm ashamed of you. I'm ashamed that we share the same blood. I'm ashamed that people think that because I am a *Mexicana*, I am like you. You act so proud of your Mexican heritage but you're a traitor to your people and a failure to your children. You should have protected them, *Medéa*. And instead you killed them. You killed them!

*She walks away and gives herself a few moments to regain her composure.*

GERTRUDE

You bring out the worst in people, you know that?

MEDEA

I know.

*She walks back to her chair.*

GERTRUDE

If you don't mind I'd like to finish this interview and go home. I miss my husband.

*MEDEA stands up and walks upstage. The GUITARRISTA stands at attention.*

MEDEA

*Guitarrista, cantame una corrido de Cuco Sanchez, por favor.*

GUITARRISTA

*¿Cual quiere, Señora?*

MEDEA

*Cantame... "Corazon Apasionado".*

GUITARRISTA

*Si Señora.*

MEDEA

Eternal love is a frightening thing, *Gertrudis*. If you're not careful, it will kill you.

*THE GUITARRISTA starts playing. The lights fade to a soft yellow. GERTRUDE watches as MEDEA leaves the room and goes through her mental hallway. She starts to undress, slowly, sensually, as if she were doing a striptease. She looks at GERTRUDE as she removes her clothing. MEDEA smiles and turns away. As she passes through her inner world, MEDEA goes to the GUITARRISTA and whispers in her ear. They smile at each other. MEDEA enters the Hacienda and walks towards JASON.*

*End Scene.*

Scene 6

*The lights rise in the Hacienda. JASON waits for MEDEA by the bed. As she walks towards him he removes his shirt. She approaches him. He grabs her and throws her on the bed, face down. He pulls her hips up and rips her panties off then pulls down his pants. They fuck, hard fast and furious. They fuck to the rhythm of the music. They fuck until they both cum in a loud roar of pain and ecstasy. The GUITARRISTA stops playing. JASON hunches over MEDEA. They lay still for a moment, breathing heavy. GERTRUDE has watched this whole scene, unable to take her eyes off JASON and MEDEA. MEDEA turns and looks at JASON.*

JASON

No, don't! Don't look at me! I said don't fucking look at me!

MEDEA

Where do you want me to look?

JASON

I don't care, just don't look at me. Get up. Cover yourself.

*He puts his shirt back on as MEDEA stands and walks to the other side of the room. JASON runs to the window and throws up.*

MEDEA

That's a first for me.

JASON

Shut up.

MEDEA

Well if I can't look at you and I can't talk to you what can I do?

JASON

Smoke a cigarette. How come you haven't smoked any cigarettes?

MEDEA

I quit.

JASON

Since when?

MEDEA

Since I ran out of money.

JASON

That's too bad. Most smokers like to have a cigarette before they die.

MEDEA

I guess this isn't my lucky day.

JASON

No, it isn't.

MEDEA

Would you like a towel?

JASON

No.

MEDEA

You're drenched in sweat.

JASON

You got what you wanted. Now talk to me.

MEDEA

It felt good to have you inside me again.

JASON

I swear to God, *Medéa, en el tumba de mi madre*...If you don't start giving me the answers I'm looking for, I'll destroy this piece of shit hacienda you call home and hang your severed head from the burning *vigas*!

MEDEA

This place looks like shit now, but it used to be beautiful. Back in the day when my father was still alive and everyone was happy.

JASON

I don't have time for a trip down memory lane!

MEDEA

Just shut up and listen! My father and I used to go and pick fruit from the trees by the water. We would sit alone and he would tell me stories and sing me *corridos* from Cuco Sanchez. They were sad and they made me cry but I loved to be with my father so I didn't mind listening to them. I always felt so safe with him. He was the first one to warn me about the dangers of other men. He told me "*Chiquita*, you're going to be beautiful one day...so beautiful that men will not be able to control themselves around you." He warned me to be careful when dealing with the opposite sex. He said my beauty would hurt me...

JASON

Damnit, *Medéa*!

MEDEA

My beauty has brought me more pain and sorrow than you could possibly imagine, Jason! Do you know what men do with beauty like mine? They become obsessed with it. They worship it and they hate it. They dream of having it all to themselves. They dream of killing it to escape the longing it gives them. I am not a woman with thoughts or feelings. I am only a piece of meat. *Una pedazo de carne* that they can fuck and brag about and then throw away! Even you were mesmerized by my beauty when you first saw me. I could see it in your eyes. It's the same look I get from all men. It's the same look you gave me right before you fucked me. Hunger, savage hunger.

JASON

So what?

MEDEA

Our daughters were cursed with the same problem.

JASON

What?

MEDEA

They were beautiful girls.

JASON

Yes, they were but they were babies.

MEDEA

To you. But to a man with no morals...they were fresh young meat.

JASON

What are you saying?

MEDEA

Why don't you open your ears? Hear it Jason! Hear what I'm saying to you!

JASON

I don't know what the fuck you're saying! You're talking crazy again!

MEDEA

Hear it Jason. Hear it!

JASON

Why don't you spit it out already?!

MEDEA

You see? You are blind to everything around you! If there isn't money involved you don't want it!

JASON

I'm so sick of your destruction. I should have put you in the ground years ago.

MEDEA

Don't flatter yourself. Killing me isn't going to be as easy as you think.

JASON

Why can't it be easy? I despise you!

MEDEA

You don't have the courage to kill anyone. You had several opportunities to do it while we were running from the *Indios*. You never once lifted your knife.

JASON

Why should I have gotten myself dirty on those pimps blood? You were all too willing to kill for me. I guess that urge never went away.

MEDEA

No. It got stronger when I became a mother.

JASON

I thought mothers were supposed to look guard their young.

MEDEA

That's exactly what I was doing.

JASON

Guarding them from what?!

MEDEA

From you!

JASON

Me?

MEDEA

You gave our daughters away so you could live like a king!

JASON

More crazy talk! Who would I give my children to?

MEDEA

That *pinche cerdo!*

JASON

*¡Mentirosa!* How could you say such an evil thing? I kept those girls safe with me. I loved them more than anything!

MEDEA

Not more than money and power.

JASON

It's just like you to turn this around on me, you crazy bitch! You're the one that killed them! You're the one who drowned them in the river!

MEDEA

Because they were cursed! They didn't stand a chance. I had to take them out of there before their spirit was destroyed.

JASON

Stop! Stop lying!

MEDEA

You should have known. You should have felt it!

JASON

No man would ever dream of hurting my daughters. I would have killed him!

MEDEA

But you were distracted by that whore and her money!

JASON

I won't let you blame this on me!

MEDEA

Why not? Are you afraid I might be right?

*JASON walks over to MEDEA. He grabs her and turns her around putting the knife to her throat.*

JASON

Tell me you're lying so I can slit your fucking throat.

*He presses the knife deep into her throat, drawing blood.*

JASON

*¡Digame!*

MEDEA

I can't talk with that fucking knife in my throat!

*He takes the knife away and throws MEDEA to the ground. She falls hard. JASON puts Away the knife.*

JASON

*¡Maldito corazón!*

*A few moments pass.*

JASON

Tell me what you did with my babies after you drowned them.

*MEDEA crawls to the bed.*

MEDEA

I buried them.

JASON

Where?

MEDEA

Jason...

JASON

Where are they?

MEDEA

They're safe.

JASON

Where!

MEDEA

Fuck, Jason, I buried them! Why does it matter where?

JASON

It matters to me.

MEDEA

Don't make me do this. I'll tell you why, but don't make me tell you the details. I can't relive that night. It's too painful.

JASON

Where did you bury them?

MEDEA

I made sure they had a proper burial.

JASON

Tell me.

MEDEA

I gave them corn.

JASON

I have to find them.

MEDEA

I placed their bodies to the North.

JASON

*Medéa!*

MEDEA

*El Paso!*

JASON

*¿El Paso?*

MEDEA

I wanted to keep them close to me. I tried to bring them into *México*, but I didn't make it.

JASON

You say that as if you cared for them.

MEDEA

I do care for them! Don't you see that yet? I had to save them!

JASON

I have never wanted to kill anyone as much as I want to kill you now.

MEDEA

Then kill me. Put me out of my misery.

JASON

I'm not done with you yet.

MEDEA

You'll never be done with me, Jason. Never.

*The GUITARRISTA plays "Guitarras, Lloren Guitarras." MEDEA makes the transformation through the inner world and back to her place in the interview room. She moves reluctantly, wandering around the bright red space as if she were lost. She finds her clothes and gets dressed.*

*End scene.*

Scene 7

*The light in the interview room rises. GERTRUDE watches MEDEA as she slowly gets Dressed. The GUITARRISTA continues to play.*

*MEDEA sits on the ground. GERTRUDE calls her name but she doesn't respond.*

GERTRUDE

*Medéa?*

*MEDEA looks back at JASON longingly.*

GERTRUDE

*Medéa! Medéa!*

*MEDEA stands and enters the interview room.*

MEDEA

What's the matter with you? Why are you yelling at me?

*She sits.*

GERTRUDE

You stopped breathing.

MEDEA

Did I? I didn't notice.

*She grabs a cigarette.*

MEDEA

Do you have a light?

*GERTRUDE lights her cigarette. Then lays the lighter on the table.*

MEDEA

Thank you. I can smoke all the cigarettes I want in this jail but I can't have my own lighter. They're afraid I'll light myself on fire or something. Isn't that the most ridiculous thing you've ever heard? I'm on death row and they're afraid I'll kill myself.

*SHE takes a few seconds.*

MEDEA

Do you believe in destiny, *Gertrudis*?

GERTRUDE

I already told you I didn't.

MEDEA

I was hoping I'd changed your mind.

GERTRUDE

No, I'm sorry. You haven't.

MEDEA

Don't be sorry. Don't ever be sorry for anything you do. You'll never be able to forgive yourself. *Mi mamá* used to say that. She said regret is something a person should not have to feel. Not if they are following their destiny.

GERTRUDE

You can't murder another human being and call it destiny.

MEDEA

If you're going to do it don't be sorry for it. There's a difference.

GERTRUDE

There is no excuse for murder.

MEDEA

Sometimes there is.

GERTRUDE

Is it true?

MEDEA

Is what true?

GERTRUDE

Garduño?

MEDEA

What do you think?

GERTRUDE

I'd like some proof.

MEDEA

I think it's time to talk about you again, *Gertrudis*.

GERTRUDE

I want to talk about Mr. Garduño and your daughters.

MEDEA

Why did you tell me you didn't have children?

GERTRUDE

What are you talking about? I don't have children.

MEDEA

But you did.

*2 Beats.*

GERTRUDE

I did. He died.

MEDEA

How did he die?

GERTRUDE

Leukemia.

MEDEA

That's too bad. How old was he?

GERTRUDE

*What* are you trying to accomplish?

MEDEA

I'm trying to connect with you. We've both lost children. It's nice to have someone to share it with.

GERTRUDE

Hah! You can't compare the two. I watched my son die slowly and there was nothing I could do about it! You killed your daughters with your own bare hands!

MEDEA

Oh come on *Gertrudis*, it wasn't that easy to stay sane while your son was sick. Do you mean to tell me that you didn't wish, just once that the gods would take him and give him peace?

*GERTRUDE slaps MEDEA.*

MEDEA

Be careful what you start. I've been known to attack when angered.

GERTRUDE

I'm not afraid of you. All I see in front of me is a scared little girl who has been kicked around her whole life. I think the reason you can't tell me the truth is because you did murder your daughters. And you butchered the Garduños. And I'm willing to bet that Jason is lying in the ground somewhere in Mexico. And it's because you were jealous.

*Beat.*

GERTRUDE

You are such a coward.

*Beat.*

GERTRUDE

You're going to die anyway! Why can't you tell me the truth?

MEDEA

The truth is right in front of you.

GERTRUDE

Pathetic. Jason was right. You are crazy.

*MEDEA jumps across the table, attacking GERTRUDE. She is ruthless and maniacal. The GUITARRISTA plays "Monedita De Oro."*

GERTRUDE

You crazy bitch! Get off!  
Stop that! Let go of me!

MEDEA

I'll kill you! I'll show you a fucking  
Coward! I'll cut your heart out!

*She bites GERTRUDE on the shoulder.*

GERTRUDE

Ow!

*TITA opens the door and pulls MEDEA and GERTRUDE apart.*

TITA

Alright! Break it up! Break it up!

GERTRUDE

What are you, an animal?

*The GUITARRISTA stops playing. MEDEA paces the room like a nervous cat.*

TITA

Come on, *Medéa*. The warden warned you about this shit. You gotta stop attacking people.

MEDEA

She called me a coward. I had to prove her wrong.

TITA

One more time and they take away your smoking privileges. You don't want that do you? You gotta have a smoke before they...well, you know. *(to GERTRUDE)* Are you alright, *comadre*?

GERTRUDE

I'm fine.

TITA

I can get you checked out by the nurse.

MEDEA

No, leave her alone, Tita. She's a hard core journalist, willing to do anything for a story. She can handle a few scratches.

GERTRUDE

I don't need the nurse.

TITA

Alright. Your times almost up anyway. You have 15 minutes, tops.

GERTRUDE

Thank you, Tita.

TITA

No problem, *comadre*. We're all sisters here. You be good *Medéa*.

*TITA'S almost out the door then turns around.*

TITA

You sure you don't want me to stick around, just in case she attacks you again?

*She doesn't wait for an answer. She laughs and leaves.*

*GERTRUDE straightens her clothes and hair as MEDEA sits down and lights a cigarette.*

GERTRUDE

Why me?

MEDEA

What?

GERTRUDE

In all these years, you haven't said a word. You didn't even testify at the trial. Why did you contact me? Are you looking for sympathy?

MEDEA

I don't need your sympathy. I need you to tell my story.

GERTRUDE

Believe me *Medéa*, that's all I want to do.

MEDEA

*Bueno.* Let's wrap this up.

*GERTRUDE sits as MEDEA exits the interview room. As she removes her clothes she walks To the GUITARRISTA.*

MEDEA

¿Guitarrista?

GUITARRISTA

¿Sí Señora?

MEDEA

*Cantame Fallaste Corazon.*

*The GUITARRISTA strums her guitar.*

*MEDEA turns to GERTRUDE. Her voice sounds like a dream.*

MEDEA

Are you with me *Gertrudis*?

GERTRUDE

I'm here.

MEDEA

Don't leave me.

GERTRUDE

I won't.

*End scene.*

Scene 8

*MEDEA enters the hacienda and sits on the bed. JASON is staring out the window towards the sea. They are silent for a few moments as The GUITARRISTA finishes her song.*

MEDEA  
Do you believe in destiny, Jason?

JASON  
I don't know what I believe anymore.

MEDEA  
I believe in it. I have to. It's all I have left.

*JASON is silent. He looks defeated.*

MEDEA  
I have to tell you the rest of the story.

JASON  
I don't know if I care anymore.

MEDEA  
You care.

JASON  
What does it matter? They're already gone.

MEDEA  
You have to understand why I did it.

JASON  
Maybe I don't.

MEDEA  
You can't hide from the truth Jason.

JASON  
Why not? You did.

MEDEA  
I didn't come here to hide.

JASON  
What did you come here for?

To wait for you.

MEDEA

Why do you lie? To hurt me?

JASON

You know I don't lie.

MEDEA

It doesn't matter. Nothing matters anymore. My babies are gone and my only chance of being a success is over.

JASON

They were being hurt in that house, Jason.

MEDEA

Nobody was hurting them.

JASON

Yes. He was. And she was helping them.

MEDEA

Ah! Now you're blaming *Chavela tambien!*

JASON

Why do you think I killed them?

MEDEA

Because you were jealous!

JASON

I could have had any man I wanted! I would never kill for jealousy.

MEDEA

The only man you ever wanted was me.

JASON

That is true. But I never lost you.

MEDEA

No?

JASON

MEDEA

No. It was my babies that I was losing. And I wasn't about to let that pig and his daughter ruin them the way I was ruined.

JASON

Where's your proof? Do you have any proof?

MEDEA

A mother knows when her children are being hurt.

JASON

You have nothing?

MEDEA

Damnit, Jason! There's no more time to pretend! You know I'm telling you the truth.

JASON

I don't know that! You've been manipulating me from the very beginning!

MEDEA

The truth was staring you in the face but you chose to ignore it!

JASON

I gave those girls a good life! You should have seen them there, *Medéa!* There were gifts everyday. Toys, dolls, clothes...so many clothes.

MEDEA

Of course there were! He wanted to keep them quiet!

JASON

I took them to paradise! The house of their dreams!

MEDEA

Your dreams! The house of your dreams!

JASON

Yes, my dreams! My dreams to make them happy!

MEDEA

You were so blinded by your *pinche* dreams you forgot to look out for *mis hijas!*

JASON

No! I was always there for them!

MEDEA

Always? Did you tuck them into bed every night? Did you check on them to make sure they were still breathing? Did you check on them first thing in the morning to give them *besos y abrazos* and ask them about their dreams?

*JASON is silent.*

MEDEA

Jason? Did you?

JASON

A father doesn't do stuff like that. It's a mother's job to check on the girls. *Chavela* did it everyday. She loved those girls.

MEDEA

She loved them? How did she love them? The way a mother should love her children?

JASON

Yes!

MEDEA

No! She was only prepping them for her pig.

JASON

Stop it, *Medéa*. *Por favor*. I can't listen to anymore of this.

MEDEA

I bet she spent most of her time distracting you from the girls. Didn't she?

JASON

Stop.

MEDEA

I'll bet she took you away a lot and left them with her father...because he loved them so much.

JASON

He was happy to have young ones back in his home. They brought life to him. That's what he said.

MEDEA

I told you, their beauty was dangerous. Men take advantage of beauty like that. Their innocence was stolen right out from under you.

JASON

No! Stop!

MEDEA

The truth is cruel, Jason.

JASON

They were happy in that home. They were happy with me and *Chavela*.

MEDEA

You and *Chavela* handed them to that pig on a silver platter!

JASON

*¡Serpiente!* Why are you doing this to me?!

MEDEA

You failed them Jason just like you failed me!

*JASON starts pacing. He's wild with anger.*

JASON

Your filthy lies have to stop. You must be stopped. You belong in hell.

*She walks over to him and grabs the knife.*

MEDEA

Then kill me. Send me to hell.

JASON

Get that knife out of my face.

MEDEA

Kill me!

*He takes the knife from her and presses it into her stomach. They stare each other down.*

MEDEA

*¿Cual es problema? ¿No tienes huevos?*

*JASON pushes the knife deeper. He is shaking.*

MEDEA

Do it!

*He drops the knife and walks away.*

MEDEA

*Cobárde.*

*She walks back to the bed in silence. JASON is crying.*

MEDEA

Don't you know that I'm the only one you can trust, Jason?

JASON

How could you kill them without any proof?

MEDEA

Deep down you know I'm telling the truth.

JASON

I don't know what the truth is anymore.

MEDEA

That *puta* and her father deserved to die.

JASON

Our daughters didn't deserve to die.

MEDEA

They were ruined. They would have suffered their whole lives.

JASON

They were not suffering!

MEDEA

When you moved in with the *puta* you left the girls. Then you came back for them. Why?

JASON

I wanted to get settled first.

MEDEA

Really?

JASON

It was a big move, *Medéa!* I wanted to make sure everything was perfect before I brought them.

MEDEA

Weren't you afraid that the *puta* and her father wouldn't want them there?

JASON

Maybe.

MEDEA

So why didn't you leave them with me? You would have had it made. A big house. A new wife. All the money you could ask for. And access to the most powerful business man in the country. And you wouldn't have the burden of two little girls cramping your style.

JASON

Rofelio felt sorry for them staying in such a bad neighborhood. He encouraged me to bring them to his house. He said he would be more than happy to have such beautiful girls living under his roof. He was good to them. He would sit them on his lap and...

*Realization washes over JASON like a poison. He falls to his knees.*

JASON

What have I done?

*He looks to the Heaven's.*

JASON

What have I done?!

MEDEA

Jason, I still love you. No matter what you did. And you love me too.

*JASON rises and walks to the window.*

JASON

Love? Is that what you call this?

MEDEA

Yes.

JASON

This isn't love. This is hell. The day I met you, I sold my soul to the devil. I knew the minute I saw you I had to have you. In my arms, in my bed, in my soul. I wanted to crawl inside your skin and hibernate there. I wanted to drink your warm blood because I thought it would help me be closer to you. I needed you so much. I knew I would take you with me even though you belonged to those *Indios*. I had to. I couldn't leave you. You didn't just save me from them, you ruled me, *Medéa*, heart and soul. You still rule me.

MEDEA

You rule me too Jason.

JASON

Who was I fooling thinking I could get away from you? There was no escaping you. I knew that.

MEDEA  
Jason...please...

JASON  
Why didn't you kill me too?

MEDEA  
It wasn't the right time.

*He picks up the knife, and hands it to MEDEA.*

JASON  
Do it.

MEDEA  
I don't want to.

JASON  
Do it!

MEDEA  
No!

JASON  
Please, *Medéa*. I have nothing left.

*He pulls his shirt open more and juts his chin proudly towards the ceiling.*

MEDEA  
Promise me one thing.

*Silence.*

MEDEA  
Promise me you'll wait for me on the other side.

*MEDEA stares at him. A tear rolls down her cheek.*

MEDEA  
*Mí amor.*

*She shoves the knife into his stomach. JASON falls to the floor. MEDEA falls with him. She takes his head in her lap and smooths his hair as she hums softly a Cuco Sanchez tune.*

Duermete, mi amor. Duermete. MEDEA

Medéa? JASON

¿Sí? MEDEA

Can I? JASON

Do you want to borrow her? MEDEA

*He nods his head.*

¿Guitarrista? MEDEA

¿Si Señora? GUITARRISTA

*The GUITARRISTA walks into the bedroom where JASON and MEDEA are. She holds up her guitar, ready to play.*

Play a song for Jason. MEDEA

¿Guitarrista? JASON

¿Si Señor? GUITARRISTA

Cantame, “La Cama De Piedra”. ¿Te recuerdas? JASON

Si Señor. GUITARRISTA

*THE GUITARRISTA starts playing “La Cama De Piedra” slowly while JASON dies. The lights in the Hacienda fade as the red light in the inner world comes up. MEDEA gets up and grabs JASON by his arms, pulling him with her into the inner world. THE GUITARRISTA*

*follows behind playing the song. She stops in the center between the Hacienda and the Interview room and places JASON gently back down. She bows her head and makes the sign of the cross. GERTRUDE is watching the scene and makes the sign of the cross. MEDEA grabs a jug of gasoline and pours it over JASON'S body.*

GERTRUDE

No, *Medéa*...no

*She lights a match and throws it on JASON, lighting him on fire. The GUITARRISTA finishes the song. JASON'S body burns to ashes as MEDEA prepares herself for her last encounter with GERTRUDE.*

*End scene.*

Scene 9

*MEDEA enters the Interview room. GERTRUDE watches her with tears in her eyes. MEDEA sits and grabs her cigarettes.*

MEDEA

Shit...empty.

GERTRUDE

Would you like me to ask Tita for a cigarette?

MEDEA

No.

GERTRUDE

Are you sure?

*GERTRUDE stands.*

MEDEA

I don't need you to get me anything right now. I just want you to sit down.

*GERTRUDE sits. A few moments of silence.*

GERTRUDE.

You killed Jason.

MEDEA

I gave him peace.

GERTRUDE

Everyone is dead. And now you're going to die too.

MEDEA

Yes.

GERTRUDE

Was it worth it?

MEDEA

I would do it again if I had to.

*Beat.*

MEDEA

Now you know what happened. The question is...Do you believe me?

GERTRUDE

It doesn't matter if I believe you, does it?

MEDEA

Maybe I need you to believe me.

GERTRUDE

Why?

MEDEA

I need my own peace.

GERTRUDE

Maybe you'll find your peace in death, *Medéa*.

MEDEA

*Quizá.*

*TITA is coming down the hall whistling and jangling her keys.*

*MEDEA and GERTRUDE stare at each other. The door opens and TITA walks in. She holds his night stick up at GERTRUDE.*

TITA

*Orale*, what's going on in here?

*TITA laughs. GERTRUDE rolls her eyes.*

GERTRUDE

You're all nuts in this place.

TITO

Shit. You *have* to be nuts to be in this place. Are you ready, *Medéa*?

MEDEA

I am so ready.

*MEDEA stands.*

MEDEA

Do you have a cigarette, *Tita*?

TITA

Sure, here you go.

MEDEA

Thanks.

*She turns to GERTRUDE.*

MEDEA

I need a light.

*GERTRUDE lights her cigarette.*

MEDEA

So, *Gertrudis*, tell me. Do you believe in destiny yet?

*She thinks for a few moments.*

GERTRUDE

*Quizá.* Maybe.

*MEDEA gives GERTRUDE a wink and a smile.*

MEDEA

I'll take it.

*She holds her hand out to GERTRUDE.*

MEDEA

*Adios, Gertrudis Hernandez.*

TITA

*¡Qué chingou!* That's a tongue twister, no?

*The women laugh. But it's a filled with sadness.*

MEDEA

Say hi to your husband for me.

*She walks out. The GUITARRISTA follows her.*

TITA

I'll be back to get you in a minute, *comadre*. Sit tight.

*TITA closes the door, locking it behind her.*

*The guitar strums and The GUITARRISTA sings "La Cama de Piedra."*

*MEDEA joins her. They sing until they are no longer in sight.*

*GERTRUDE sits down in her chair. She grabs the pack of cigarettes that MEDEA left on the table. She reaches in and finds one cigarette left in the pack.*

GERTRUDE

*Malvada.*

*She lights the cigarette and takes a long drag. Lights fade.*

*End Play*