

# Medealand (2009)

## By Sara Stridsberg

Duration 75 minutes

Cast size 7

### Excerpt

#### Scene 16

*Medea is sitting on the floor. The Goddess enters. Dressed as for mourning. Medea looks up and follows her with her gaze.*

MEDEA

I have nothing to say.

*The Goddess turns to the audience and pays no attention to Medea.*

THE GODDESS

A mother killed her two children. Afterwards she walked into the sea, her dress full of stones. The sky above was in flames. The shore was deserted.

*Medea listens in astonishment.*

MEDEA

Why are you dressed in clothes for mourning? Who died?

GODDESS

A mother sits in the kitchen with her two children. Her oven is full of roses. The kitchen is a yellow dome of light in which everything will be preserved. The big boy stands on a chair at the sink. The little one is perched on her hip. She whisks and whisks. Then she turns on the gas oven.

MEDEA

Why are you telling me this?

*Medea continues to study her. She stands up and moves close to the Goddess as she speaks, listening carefully, reading her lips. As if she were under hypnosis or standing at the bottom of the sea.*

GODDESS

A mother walks into the garden with her sleeping children. Shards in the wet grass. Her pale feet are bleeding. The trees are asleep. No birds are singing. She tucks her boys into a soft bed of earth. She is sure they are asleep, because she has given them soda and sleeping pills. Their slumber will be long and undisturbed. No more unhappiness. She places the little boy's hand in the big boy's hand. She says a prayer. Then she lies on top of the earth and looks at the sky rushing by above.

MEDEA

Child-killer.

GODDESS

The marriage bed is a grave for women.

MEDEA

Child-killer.

GODDESS

A mother looks in on her children for the last time. The children are asleep in their bunk bed. The little one still has a pacifier. She tenderly presses the poison capsules into their mouths. The boys smell like sleep and sugar. She gently squeezes their jaws on the glass. The poison explodes across their baby teeth. Death is instantaneous. She leaves the room. *(Pause.)* A mother dresses her two sons all in white. She wraps up a piece of sponge cake for each and tucks it into their backpacks. Don't forget to eat along the way. The sunny cake is in the outer compartments. The sun beams down around them. Their packs are heavy on their thin backs. She kisses their faces one last time and tells them to go to the forbidden zone. They walk through the wilderness. They pass lakes and open fields. The sun burns. Toothpick legs in their boots. A mother says her final prayer at the kitchen table. At the roadblock, the backpacks explode.

*Medea is still in her hypnotized state.*

MEDEA

No.

GODDESS

A mother climbs the mountain with her youngest son. The sky is thick and the clouds flicker. It takes days to get there on stubby little legs, but he loves the adventure. At the top of the mountain, he helps her gather sticks and rotting leaves. She prepares a fire.

*Medea falls to her knees, crying.*

MEDEA

No. No. No. Please, don't do it. Tell her she must not do it.

GODDESS

No point. She can't hear us anymore. The boy helps her throw kindling on the fire. His little face is already purple from the heat.

MEDEA

But I'm afraid. I'm so terribly afraid. I can't do it.

GODDESS

She waits for something to stop her. She waits for the gods to step down from the heavens and spare her and take all the tinder from her hands. But there is no God. The light dies out. Her soul is burning at the seams—

MEDEA

No. No. No. Please. Don't do it. Spare me this.

GODDESS

She waits for a sign. A streak of light in the mute sky above. A rent (EN REVA) of mercy in this billowing, indifferent blue silk. But God is not there. God will never return. When darkness falls, she lights the fire for the child.

MEDEA

Please. Have mercy on her. Take the fire away from her. Let her be spared the final part. Tell her that this was only a trial, and that she was brave and strong, but now she can stop and go back to her child, or just walk away on her own. Have mercy on her. Tell her—

*Silence.*

*Medea moves through the room.*

MEDEA

A mother drives onto the highway with her two boys in the back seat. The wilderness spreads out around the car. An Amazon gray as a sowbug. Why shouldn't we put on our seatbelts, Mama? Because it's fun to ride without a belt, my little dragonfly. We're going far away this time. Where are we going? Crawl on up here, if you want to. You can sit here next to me and help me drive. But isn't that dangerous, Mama? Are you sure, Mama? Isn't it dangerous to be loose in the car? No, my angel, nothing is dangerous anymore. Hey, do you see that tunnel up there? Yes, Mama, I see a mountain rising in the wilderness like a dinosaur. Is that Tyrannosaurus Rex? Sure. Sure. Now close your eyes, my darlings.

*Medea closes her eyes.*

MEDEA

Now close your eyes, my darlings. Everything is going to be okay, little Tiger. Nothing more can happen to us. Mama will take you into the sweet, soft darkness.

GODDESS

The sweet, breathtaking darkness. They will remember you now. Medea.

*Darkness. Sirens.*