

MEDEA IN BLACK AND WHITE

By Charles Eichman

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CHARACTERS

Medea	a sorceress
Black Chorus	Medea (and the play's) "voice"
White Chorus	see "Black Chorus"
Gray Chorus (minimum of 8 actors):	
Jason	former husband to Medea
Creon	King of Corinth
Nurse	servant of Medea
Tutor	servant of Medea
Aegeus	King of nearby land
Princess	Daughter of Creon, Jason's bride
Children of Medea (2)	
Guards	
Citizens of Corinth	

SETTING

A vaporous, eternal void, materializing at random intervals throughout eternity for a period of approximately one hour.

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PROLOGUE: RISING FROM THE VOID

(AT RISE: CHORUS members lie about the stage haphazardly, sleeping on top of whatever flats, platforms, etc. are being used for the production. A few are snoring. BLACK/WHITE sit in a prominent position, back to back, leaning on each other for support. Except for their neck and heads, they are covered, shoulder to ground, in a red blanket. Like everyone else, they are snoozing away. Eventually, the bright lights burn their way behind BLACK's eyelids. She yawns a bit, looks around, taps WHITE.)

BLACK: Hey... hey... *(WHITE moans disconsolately.)* Hey... HEY!

WHITE: *(bothered)* What?! *(BLACK points at the lights. WHITE looks up, squints.)*

WHITE: Eh?

BLACK: It's time.

WHITE: Eh?

BLACK: It's time.

(WHITE looks up at lights, over her shoulder at BLACK. She is still "wiping the sleep out of her eyes.")

WHITE: *(yawns)* Are you sure about this?

BLACK: *(a bit put out)* Yes. C'mon on, now. C'mon. Let's start.

WHITE: Alright already! Just hold your horses. *(A beat or two of WHITE yawning, rolling her neck, etc.)*

BLACK: Ahem!

WHITE: *(sighs)* Okay, okay! I'm ready.

BLACK: One... two... THREE!

(They pull apart. A tearing, velcro-like sound occurs. The red blanket drops to the ground. BLACK and WHITE are revealed for the first time as their separate (and usually equal) selves. Henceforth, they will serve as commentators on and narrators of the play (as well as their additional function of representing the various aspects of MEDEA's personality.)

(BLACK and WHITE wake up a few members of the GRAY CHORUS [WHITE in a motherly fashion, BLACK rather roughly]. As CHORUS awakes, they begin to kibbitz, the general conversation running something like, "Well, it's time to get on with-" "Again?" "Hey,

didn't we just-". They take some time to greet each other ["Sleep well?" "Why, yes." etc.]. Meanwhile, WHITE sneaks off, sits down and begins to perform yoga. Chattering among GRAY CHORUS continues, until...)

WHITE: *(meditating in a lotus position)* OMMMMMMMMMMMM
MMMMMMMM...OMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM...

(Rest of cast stares at her. BLACK tries to take charge of situation.)

BLACK: Alright, now, we need to-

WHITE: OMMMMMMMM...

(Once again, everybody stares. The "OMMMMMMMMM'ing" stops. WHITE begins rolling her neck, stretching, etc., continuing the ritual. Finally...)

BLACK: *(claps hands loudly)* All right, now, break it up! Enough chit chat! Get to your places!

(And they do. Upbeat music plays, as GRAY CHORUS assembles the stage, which includes several flats. Flats representing MEDEA's house are covered in red cloth, while flats representing "The House Of Creon" are covered in gold cloth. Neutral ground [the area behind most of CS] is represented by a blue backdrop.)

(BLACK barks out orders, complains a bit about their effort. GRAY CHORUS responds in various ways, yet moves with purpose. BLACK eventually ushers them all offstage, save one CHORUS MEMBER, who remains behind to straighten out cloth, check flats, platforms, etc. The music dies, as CHORUS MEMBER gives BLACK a "thumbs up.")

BLACK: Good! *(She grabs the red blanket, tosses it to a the departing CHORUS member)* Take this with you.

CHORUS MEMBER: When are we starting?

BLACK: *(points at WHITE)* Soon as I pull her out of "lotus land."

(CHORUS MEMBER nods, smirks, exits. BLACK gingerly approaches WHITE, taps her shoulder.)

BLACK: Uh, hello? *(No response.)* It's, uh, it's time. *(No response.)*
Hello?

WHITE: Sh! *(pause)*

BLACK: *(impatient exhalation)* Look, can y-

WHITE: Sh!

BLACK: But-

WHITE: A few more seconds... (**BLACK disgusted with her.**) Wait for it...waaait...waaait... (**her eyes fly open**) Done! (**springs to her feet**) Now. What is it?

BLACK: Well, we're here.

WHITE: (**looks around, nods**) Yes. (**long pause**) Where?

BLACK: Pardon?

WHITE: Where?

BLACK: Oh! Here. (**pause**)

WHITE: Um, where is here?

BLACK: Where things happen.

WHITE: Oh.... (**beat**) Eh?

BLACK: Where things happen.

WHITE: Happen?

BLACK: Yes, happen... remember? (**pause**)

WHITE: (**dawning recognition**) Wait a minute... oh, no, not again...

BLACK: Yes...

WHITE: Surely not.

BLACK: Yes.

WHITE: Oh, please, surely not.

BLACK: YES! We must do it again.

WHITE: Again?

BLACK: Again.

WHITE: Again? (**BLACK nods.**) 'Til when?

BLACK: Forever.

WHITE: What?

BLACK: Forever. Forever and ever and ever and ever... (**pause**)

WHITE: Surely n-.

BLACK: YES!

WHITE: (**sulks**) Why?

BLACK: Well... can you imagine not doing it?

WHITE: Hmmmm... (**steps aside and actually "ponders" for a few beats, chin in hand, tapping foot, etc.; then**) It's no use, I can't. But why?

BLACK: Because. (**pause**)

WHITE: Because why?

BLACK: (**majestically**) Because "no one must ever forget!"

WHITE: (**disappointed**) Oh.

BLACK: (**indicating audience**) And, uh, they are waiting.

WHITE: Ohhh...

BLACK: Can't just let them come in and, you know... just sit there.

WHITE: Right, right.

BLACK: Fine, then. Well - shall we?

(Beat.)

WHITE: Shall we what?

BLACK: Shall we begin?

WHITE: Begin? Oh! Yes, yes, of course.

(pause)

BLACK: Well?

WHITE: Well what?

BLACK: Aren't you going to start?

WHITE: Why me?

BLACK: It's your turn.

WHITE: But, I started last time!

BLACK: It's your turn.

WHITE: L But -

BLACK: It's your. Turn! **(pause)**

WHITE: You're mean.

BLACK: **(shrugs)** Eh.

(A change in lighting to signify SCENE 1.)

SCENE 1: IT IS A TALE

WHITE: It is a tale of love.

BLACK: A tale of hate.

WHITE: Two sides of a coin.

BLACK: A deadly coin.

WHITE: Yes... where to begin?

BLACK: Uh, at the beginning.

WHITE: Yes, but how to tell it?

BLACK: Unadorned - like a blade drawn from a sheath. Tell first of him...

(JASON appears, assumes a haughty pose.)

WHITE: Ah, yes - him. He... is a quester.

BLACK: A wayfarer.

WHITE: A wanderer

BLACK: A ne'er do well.

WHITE: A hero.

BLACK: A villain.

WHITE: We should tell it unadorned, like you said.

(BLACK regards WHITE with disdain. WHITE regards JASON, continues, "unadorned.")

WHITE: It begins with a quest

(CHORUS appears, assuming poses similar to JASON's [hands on hips, jaws jutting forth, etc.] As the scene between BLACK and WHITE, below, unfurls, the following occurs: CHORUS creates "Argo," most members rowing. Two of them grasp and wave dark blue cloth to represent water. Yet another CHORUS MEMBER appears behind the crew, holding a wide piece of canvas in front of them, serving as the "mast." Written on the piece of unfurled cloth are the words "HOW'S MY SAILING? CALL 1-800-R-GO-NAUT." JASON stands behind them, as well, his pose indomitable [and still haughty].)

WHITE: A crew, and a tall ship set to steer a star, the greatest boat and crew the world had ever known. And a voyage...

(WHITE glances at BLACK, expectantly.)

BLACK: *(sighs)* Okay. Where?

WHITE: To the end of the earth. A voyage fraught with danger.

BLACK: *(aside)* Aren't they all?

WHITE: Ahem...

BLACK: Sorry. Do go on.

WHITE: Yes, a dangerous voyage, quite dangerous. *(looks over at BLACK, who is yawning)* Much more dangerous than average.

BLACK: *(shrugs)* Eh.

WHITE: They passed through clashing rocks!

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