

SCENE 1

*The lights rise on a manor of sorts, the kind that you might think beautiful at first glance, perhaps haunting, rich in history with looming walls. The longer you look, your eyes notice it isn't truly beautiful. The paint is faded. Peeling. It's a faded beauty.*

*The manor has two stories. On the second, a large window. On the first, a table where people might eat or play cards. A record player.*

*The ladies of the CHORUS sit at the table. They play a somewhat-intense game of Rummy 500. They're a few hands in.*

ANNA

Out. Once again, the eldest is simply the bestest.

EVIE

And yet you can't speak. Bestest is nonsense.

PENI

Tally up so I can deal already.

MEDEA

*(O.S.)*

Out!

*The sound of a wrecking ship, of The Argo slamming into the shore.*

*Something strange  
happens with the lights  
for but a moment.*

MEDEA

*(O.S.)*

I said to leave me be.

*A door opens on the  
first floor and out  
spills JASON. He slams  
the door shut.*

JASON

Bitch.

EVIE

Trouble in paradise.

PENI

Hush, Evie.

EVIE

Middle children who can't win a single hand have no business bossing others around.

*SARA, the caretaker of  
the manner, enters.*

SARA

Mr. Trancy, whatever is with all the shouting? I do so hate to be rude to guests, but please mind your manners. Mr. Glauce may be a patient man, but all men's fuses burn out.

JASON

Tell that to my wife.

SARA

Ah. So it is Medea.

JASON

Is it ever anyone else? I'm going on a run.

PENI  
Count your cards.

ANNA  
One short.

JASON  
Sara?

SARA  
If you're looking for the outside, Mr. Trancy, might I suggest trying the front door?

JASON  
Pardon? I'll let it slide. Do you have an icepick?

SARA  
Not in southern Virginia, I'm afraid.

JASON  
Ah. Then I can't self-lobotomize.

SARA  
Shall I fetch a screwdriver?

JASON  
No. I'm going to run.

*He leaves. Sara pulls  
out a flask and drinks.*

SARA  
Actors. Medea? Sweetie, is everything all right?

EVIE  
Is she paid to ask pointless questions?

ANNA  
Are you?

SARA  
Can I help, dear?

MEDEA

(O.S.)

Fetch the bastard's heart. Cut it out with a kitchen knife if you must. Or, better yet, find my mind so I might cage it and stop this pain. Minus any of that, leave me be to my arsenic-leadened sorrow. On second thought, a glass of gin would do nicely.

SARA

Of course.

EVIE

Just a glass?

PENI

A glass is all she needs.

MEDEA

(O.S.)

Sara? Bring the bottle.

ANNA

Ha!

EVIE

There it is.

SARA

Right. The bottle, then.

*(She drinks again from her flask.)*

Drunks.

*She exits.*

ANNA

All who pass the table are hypocrites.

EVIE

And all moralizing sisters are fools.

ANNA

Never a moment's need for radio at the table.

EVIE

Yet to drown out your voice would be a godsend.

PENI

Ah! Could we say that this whole time?

EVIE

Finally come to my side in telling Anna to sew shut her flapping jaws?

ANNA

You think I'm the one who interrupts the lovely show?

PENI

Godsend. God-send. God... send. God. God. Oh, my god. We can say, "God!" Did you know that?

ANNA

Oh, Peni, you simpleton.

EVIE

I suppose it's best that the mids of sandwiches are hid. Darling, it would be okay to leave the bickering to your beautiful sisters.

PENI

Oh, my Heavenly Father, how I've missed you.

ANNA

Beautiful sisters?

EVIE

Sister.

ANNA

Don't kid yourself, Evie. We cast off beauty long ago.

EVIE

Has your age finally turned that pea you call a brain into puree? *We* certainly had nothing to do with it.

ANNA

On that we can finally be agreed. What is she doing?

EVIE

It appears she's praying.

ANNA

There's no hope for her. Nor be it for Medea, tossed aside by the blustering prick of an actor. How he ever earned praise beyond Father is beyond me. Perhaps there's no hope for any in this world.

EVIE

Ah, but here there's hope for us, isn't there?

ANNA

None for you at the table. Out again. I've right smoked you, darling.

EVIE

You even speak the same as an old woman.

ANNA

Is she going to shuffle? Peni, the hand is over. Would you shuffle for us?

EVIE

Peni, you have to tally your points.

ANNA

Peni, we can't play if you're off in your own world.

EVIE

Space travel isn't for the ham of a sandwich.

ANNA

Is it for the bread?

EVIE

Everything is for bread.

ANNA

Money.

EVIE

Of course. No need to explain the metaphor.

*The door from earlier  
opens and out comes  
Medea.*

ANNA

The devil herself come out her hovel.

EVIE

No need to insult Mr. Glauce's home.

ANNA

Oh, Evanesce can handle having a temporary hovel. It will fade back to richness shortly.

EVIE

Shall we start our hand? Peni, it's time for the game to continue. Peni! The game. Have you gone deaf? I ought to kill you if I could.

MEDEA

Jason? Jason!

*Sara enters.*

Has he gone? Has he really gone, Sara?

SARA

Only on a run, dear. You've not been left alone.

MEDEA

A cold comfort. To see his phantom strolling about these languid floors and yet toss in a chilled bed.

SARA

*(Producing the bottle of  
gin:)*

This ought to warm you up, Mrs. Trancy.

MEDEA

Thank you, Sara. You mustn't call me that, though, as lovely as it may be to hear. Jason might fly into my room in a rage. Though better in a rage than not at all, perhaps. No. I can't afford it. Neither can you, I'm afraid. Please, call me Medea.

SARA

Mr. Glauce wouldn't be too happy if I did.

MEDEA

Allant ought to reach into his backside and remove the stick.

SARA

I'm afraid it was grafted there by the army.

MEDEA

Oh, Sara. You're a wily one, all those secrets held behind your back and masked by that gentle smile. Surely you know the army isn't in the business of grafting any sort of stick up an ass. If it's the army, it would rightly be a cock.

SARA

Medea!

MEDEA

Yes?

SARA

Mr. Glauce would throw you out this very moment if he heard that.

MEDEA

Then let him. I'm no gentle deer in the headlights of men. If they force their roads in my woods, then let them drive at me, and I'll lead us both to ruin.

SARA

I'll pretend I hadn't heard that.

MEDEA

Plausible deniability. Would you like a sip?

SARA

I don't drink, I'm afraid.

MEDEA

Pity.

SARA

A word of advice, Medea.

MEDEA

I've been battered by advice since Jason drug us here. If it weren't for advice, I'd have set sail long ago.

SARA

This mansion is called Evanesce. Do you know what that means?

MEDEA

In the style of some famous Evan?

SARA

To fade. The baseboards were set on top hallowed ground. We stand upon a small blessing from God. Stay your anger for a day. Perhaps it, too, will fade, and all will improve.

MEDEA

A day I'll give.

SARA

Thank you.

MEDEA

And then comes ruin.

SARA

I didn't hear that.

*She drinks from her  
flask and heads off.*

*Evie stands and throws  
her chair back.*

EVIE  
The game, Peni!

*The chair flies  
somewhere in the path  
of Sara. She yelps.*

MEDEA  
Does that happen often?

SARA  
I... The rumors of you.

MEDEA  
A witch, yes. I know what those demons whisper whither I go.  
Wisps in the wood. Do you believe them?

SARA  
I...

MEDEA  
True or not, I would not wish to frighten you, Sara. You've  
brought me warmth in this frigid place.

SARA  
I have chores to attend to.

*She leaves.*

PENI  
Amen. Why are you standing?

EVIE  
Are you deaf?

ANNA  
She isn't deaf. She's simply... simple. Peni, tell us, what  
see you?

PENI  
Oh. Medea had arrived.