

Euripides, Medea, 2nd episode, 220-265

Medea Corinthian women. I have come out among you so that you'll stop talking behind my back, condemning my every action. 214

I know many people -some directly, with my own eyes and others I've heard about- who were born good folk but because they stayed quietly away from society, got themselves the odious reputation of being arrogant and conceited individuals.

Eyes alone are inadequate judges of people. A judgement made without knowing a person well could result in hating that person, for no reason at all, except for the way he looks.

Sure, a foreigner must accept all the customs of his new city but I cannot praise the man who's local-born but who, due to ignorance and immaturity, hurts bitterly his fellow citizens.

Corinthian women, you know that I have to suffer an insufferable thing, a thing that has worn my soul away. I'm no longer alive! 225

I refuse all of life's charms and I seek death. Yes, death, Corinthians, because my husband, who was my whole world, had become the most evil of all men.

Of all the living things, of all those things that have a soul and a sense, we, yes we, the women, are the most pathetic!

Imagine!

We need to spend a fortune to buy us a man who... what will he do? He will become the master of our bodies! And, it's obvious, that this dangerous thing we do, becomes even more dangerous when we don't find the right husband. Is he a good husband? Or is he a bad one? By the time you find that out it's already too late.

And then, for a woman to leave her husband is neither proper nor possible. To live in a place where new laws and customs apply one needs to be a prophet, since even your own folk don't tell you how you should behave towards your husband.

And if all these things work out well and our husband lives with us without thinking the marriage yoke to be too heavy, well that would indeed be a great life. If not, though, only Death opens his arms for us. Only Death awaits us. 241

Whereas the husband, however, if he finds the house to be too great a burden for him, he leaves the place, he finds a friend or someone of similar age and immediately his heart shrugs off that weight. We, on the other hand, we, women, can only let our eyes fall upon one person and one person only, our husband.

Then people also say that while we live quietly and without any danger at home, the men go off to war. Wrong! One birth alone is worse than three times in the battlefield behind a shield.

In any case, Corinthians, things between you and me, are different. You are here, in your own country and in your own home, enjoying your life and your friends, whereas I am here alone and without a country. My husband deceives me and treats me like a prize he has just ripped out of some barbarous country; I have no mother, no brother, no relative at all to whom I can turn for support at this dreadful hour of mine.

From you, however I ask only one thing: If I manage to find some means by which I can punish my husband and his father-in-law, that man who gave him his daughter as wife, I ask of you to say nothing to anyone. Keep it a secret. 259

A woman is, in all things, timid, shy, weak and can't even look at weapons but when she's deceived by her husband, when her marriage is mocked, there is nothing more bloodthirsty than her.