

## Aegeus Dialogue

Medea, greeting! This is the best introduction  
Of which men know for conversation between friends.

*[Medea: Greeting to you too, Aegeus, son of King Pandion.  
Where have you come from to visit this country's soil?]*

I have just left the ancient oracle of Phoebus.

*[Medea: And why did you go to earth's prophetic center?]*

I went to inquire how children might be born to me.

*[Medea: Is it so? Your life still up to this point is childless?]*

Yes. By the fate of some power we have no children.

*[Medea: Have you a wife, or is there none to share your  
bed?]*

There is. Yes, I am joined to my wife in marriage.

*[Medea: And what did Phoebus say to you about children?]*

Words too wise for a mere man to guess their  
meaning.

*[Medea: Is it proper for me to be told the god's reply?]*

It is. For sure what is needed is cleverness.

*[Medea: Then what was his message? Tell me, if I may  
hear.]*

I am not to loosen the hanging foot of the wine-skin...

*[Medea: Until you have done something, or reached some  
country?]*

Until I return again to my hearth and house.

*[Medea: And for what purpose have you journeyed to this  
land?]*

There is a man called Pittheus, King of Troezen.

*[Medea: A son of Pelops, they say, a most righteous man.]*

With him I wish to discuss the reply of the god.

*[Medea: Yes. He is wise and experience in such matters.]*

And to me also the dearest of all my spear-friends.

*[Medea: Well, I hope you have good luck, and achieve your  
will.]*

But why this downcast eye of yours, and this pale  
cheek?

*[Medea: O Aegeus, my husband has been the worst of all  
to me.]*

What do you mean? Say clearly what has caused this  
grief.

*[Medea: Jason wrongs me, though I have never injured  
him.]*

What has he done? Tell me about it in clearer words.

*[Medea: He has taken a wife to his house, supplanting me.]*

Surely he would not dare to do a thing like that.

*[Medea: Be sure he has. Once dear, I now am slighted by  
him.]*

Did he fall in love? Or is he tired of your love?

*[Medea: He was greatly in love, this traitor to his friends.]*

Then let him go, if, as you say, he is so bad.

*[Medea: A passionate love—for an alliance with the king.]*

And who gave him his wife? Tell me the rest of it.

*[Medea: It was Creon, he who rules this land of Corinth.]*

Indeed, Medea, your grief was understandable.

*[Medea: I am ruined. And there is more to come: I am banished.]*

Banished? By whom? Here you tell me of a new wrong.

*[Medea: Creon drives me an exile from the land of Corinth.]*

Does Jason consent? I cannot approve of this.

*[Medea: He pretends not to, but he will put up with it. Ah, Aegeus, I beg and beseech you, by your beard and by your knees I am making myself your suppliant, have pity on me, have pity on your poor friend, and do not let me go into exile desolate, but receive me in your land and at your very hearth. So may your love, with God's help, lead to the bearing of children, and so may you yourself die happy. You do not know what a chance you have come on here. I will end your childlessness, and I will make you able to beget children. The drugs I know can do this.]*

For many reasons, woman, I am anxious to do  
This favor for you. First, for the sake of the gods,  
And then for the birth of children which you promise,  
For in that respect I am entirely at my wits' end.  
But this is my position: if you reach my land,  
I, being in my rights, will try to befriend you.  
But this much I must warn you of beforehand:  
I shall not agree to take you out of this country;  
But if you by yourself can reach my house, then you  
Shall stay there safely. To none will I give you up  
But from this land you must make your escape  
yourself,  
For I do not wish to incur blame from my friends.

*[Medea: It shall be so. But, if I might have a pledge from you for this, then I would have from you all I desire.]*

Do you not trust me? What is it rankles with you?

*[Medea: I trust you, yes. But the house of Pelias hates me, and so does Creon. If you are bound by this oath, when they try to drag me from your land, you will not abandon me; but if our pact is only words, with no oath to the gods, you will be lightly armed, unable to resist their summons. I am weak, while they have wealth to help them and a royal house.]*

You show much foresight for such negotiations.

Well, if you will have it so, I will not refuse.

For, both on my side this will be the safest way  
To have some excuse to put forward to your enemies,  
And for you it is more certain. You may name the gods.

*[Medea: Swear by the plain of Earth, and Helios, father of my father, and name together all the gods...]*

That I will act or not act in what way? Speak.

*[Medea: That you yourself will never cast me from your land, nor, if any of my enemies should demand me, will you, in your life, willingly hand me over.]*

I swear by the Earth, by the holy light of Helios,  
By all the gods, I will abide by this you say.

*[Medea: Enough. And, if you fail, what shall happen to you?]*

What comes to those who have no regard for heaven.

*[Medea: Go on your way. Farewell. For I am satisfied. And I will reach your city as soon as I can, having done the deed I have to do and gained my end.]*