

## Seven reasons why being a woman in ancient Greece was unfair (according to Medea)

*Of all things that live and have intelligence, we women are the most wretched creatures.* 1.

*First, we must buy a husband at a high price<sup>1</sup> and take a master over our bodies, an even more painful evil than the other.<sup>2</sup>* 2.

*Here the stakes are highest: do we take a bad man or a good one? A woman can't get divorced and keep her good reputation,<sup>3</sup> and she has no right to refuse her husband. After arriving among new customs and rules, she must be a prophet, since she was not taught at home how to deal with her husband.* 3.  
4.

*If we work hard at this, and our husband bears the yoke of marriage without violence,<sup>4</sup> life is enviable; but, if not, better to die.<sup>5</sup> A man, when he is annoyed with those inside, goes out and stops the nausea in his heart, but we must look to just one person.<sup>6</sup>* 5.

*They say that we live lives free from danger, while they go out to fight wars with spears, but their logic is flawed. I would rather stand shield to shield three times than give birth just once.<sup>7</sup>* 6.  
7.

Euripides' *Medea*, Lines 230-251

Thomas, J.E. 2005. *Medea*. Clayton: Prestwick House.