

Playwright Monologues (Female)

**GREEK:**

**ANTIGONE:** Tomb, bridal chamber, eternal prison in the caverned rock, whither I go to find mine own, those many who have perished, and whom Persephone hath received among the dead! Last of all shall I pass thither, and far most miserably of all, before the term of my life is spent. But I cherish good hope that my coming will be welcome to my father, and pleasant to thee, my mother, and welcome, brother, to thee; for, when you died, with mine own hands I washed and dressed you, and poured drink-offerings at your graves; and now, Polyneices, 'tis for tending thy corpse that I win such recompense as this. And yet I honored thee, as the wise will deem, rightly. Never had I been a mother of children, or if a husband had been moldering in death, would I have taken this task upon me in the city's despite.

**ANTIGONE:** What law, ye ask, is my warrant for that word? The husband lost, another might have been found, and child from another, to replace the first-born; but, father and mother hidden with Hades, no brother's life could ever bloom for me again. Such was the law whereby I held thee first in honor; but Creon deemed me guilty of error therein, and of outrage, ah brother mine! And now he leads me thus, a captive in his hands; no bridal bed, no bridal song hath been mine, no joy of marriage, no portion in the nurture of children; but thus, forlorn of friends, unhappy one, I go living to the vaults of death. And what law of Heaven have I transgressed?

**MEDEA:**

In vain, my children, have I brought you up,  
Borne all the cares and pangs of motherhood,  
And the sharp pains of childbirth undergone.

In you, alas, was treasured many a hope  
Of loving sustentation in my age,  
Of tender laying out when I was dead,  
Such as all men might envy.

Those sweet thoughts are mine no more, for now bereft of you  
I must wear out a drear and joyless life,  
And you will nevermore your mother see,  
Nor live as ye have done beneath her eye.  
Alas, my sons, why do you gaze on me,

Why smile upon your mother that last smile?  
Ah me! What shall I do? My purpose melts  
Beneath the bright looks of my little ones.  
I cannot do it. Farewell, my resolve,  
I will bear off my children from this land.  
Why should I seek to wring their father's heart,  
When that same act will doubly wring my own?  
I will not do it. Farewell, my resolve.  
What has come o'er me? Shall I let my foes  
Triumph, that I may let my friends go free?  
I'll brace me to the deed. Base that I was  
To let a thought of wickedness cross my soul.  
Children, go home. Whoso accounts it wrong  
To be attendant at my sacrifice,  
Let him stand off; my purpose is unchanged.  
Forego my resolutions, O my soul,  
Force not the parent's hand to slay the child.  
Their presence where we will go will gladden thee.  
By the avengers that in Hades reign,  
It never shall be said that I have left  
My children for my foes to trample on.  
It is decreed.

**CASSANDRA:** Where am I? Fled is the kindly light, deep darkness  
blinds my eyes, and the sky, buried in gloom, is hidden away. But see!  
with double sun the day gleams forth, and double Argos lifts up twin  
palaces! Ida's groves I see; there sits the shepherd, fateful judge  
midst mighty goddesses.-- Fear him, ye kings, I warn you, fear the  
child of stolen love; that rustic foundling shall overturn your house.  
What means that mad woman with drawn sword in hand? What hero  
seeks she with her right hand, a Spartan in her garb, but carrying an  
Amazonian axe?-- What sight is that other which now employs mine  
eyes? The king of beasts with his proud neck, by a base fang lies low,  
an Afric lion, suffering the bloody bites of his bold lioness.-- Why do ye  
summon me, saved only of my house, my kindred shades? Thee,  
father, do I follow, eye-witness of Troy's burial; thee, brother, help of

the Phrygians, terror of the Greeks, I see not in thine old-time splendour, or with thine hands hot from the burning of the ships, but mangled of limb, with those arms wounded by the deep-sunk thongs; thee, Troilus, I follow, too early with Achilles met; unrecognizable the face thou wearest, Deiphobus, the gift of thy new wife.