

Isabella Webster

Medusa

*Audience sits in-the-round. Spotlight on **Warrior**, dressed in awkward fitting suit and tie and Ancient Greek style shield and sword. He holds the shield up to his face while listening and turning to face different directions. On stage there are the remains of the statues of men, broken up, slashed, etc. Behind the audience there are statues of women with different expressions, pristine and untouched. On the stage there is the statue of a small girl, holding her face in her hands.*

***Medusa's** voice plays from one direction of the audience, and he turns to face it, still holding up the shield.*

MEDUSA: I want you to listen very carefully ... you do not have to die here.

WARRIOR: Your words do not scare me.

***Medusa's** voice plays from a different area from behind the audience.*

MEDUSA: Every one of these *heroes* was the same as you, you are not special. They all thought they could kill me, they all tried, and they all failed. Whatever you have to prove, it is not worth your life.

WARRIOR: I have nothing to prove, the gods chose me.

***Medusa's** voice plays from a different direction.*

MEDUSA: Their self-interest is their only motivation- they care what you can do for them. They take pleasure from toying with us like cats.

***Medusa** emerges from behind the audience walking towards **Warrior**. A faint dark blue background lighting fades up to show her. She joins him on the stage.*

You are not stupid for believing what you have been convinced of all your life, but I isolated myself from the world so that I would not hurt

anyone, while they send plaything after plaything to see whether I can survive extinguishing another life. You are just a boy. Your gods have groomed your aspirations, as they did to so many others. They are vile. Every last one of them.

WARRIOR: You lie.

MEDUSA: You deny! The truth hurts me every single day- I served Athena my whole life! After Poseidon, I came to her crawling, sobbing and pleading to her for help!

Can you guess what she did instead?

Your gods forced trauma down my throat, and now punish me by sending the likes of you to grip a blade to my neck. I am hunted down by man after man, simply because he feels entitled to me.

WARRIOR: *(gesturing to the statues of women and small girl).* And them?

(pause)

MEDUSA: I know you will not believe me, but they were accidents. I do not know whether they are lost or curious about the rumours, but when I hear them, I try to hide or at least close my eyes. Seeing me usually scares them away.

She walks slowly to the statue of the girl and crouches in front of her gently, looking at her face.

She found me when I was sleeping, but when I awoke, it was already too late.

...

They remind me of what I have become: how I have contributed to your god's poisoning of the world, and why I deserve this existence. I let myself become what I hate. I am still their toy.

WARRIOR: Why keep fighting? Why not give in?

MEDUSA: Dying would be a relief, but only if you were to leave me somewhere peaceful, and quiet, where no one would find me. Only if you were to let my body return to the earth with grace and dignity. I could not let

you present me as a trophy. I promised myself that I would never be used by them again.

WARRIOR: I promised your head.

MEDUSA: Blood is a smell that stains your tongue, and a glory killing is just as potent. Parading my head down the streets like a trophy will not make you a hero. You do not have to play their game.

WARRIOR unsheathes his sword

I cannot help myself from hoping that one day, one of you might try to listen. But I am always disappointed.

(pause)

Before you attempt to kill me, know that I will not let you. I will not let another man use me because he decided that he deserved it. I will not let my body be exploited to aid and glorify my murderers and betrayers.

I will fight.

And I will win.

Synopsis

The sample script is for a short play that has the Medusa as the main protagonist from the Greek myth where Athena turns her into a Gorgon (a creature with hair of snakes that turns people into stone when they look into her eyes) after Poseidon sexually assaults her.

The play involves both modern and historic devices like costume, props, environments, etc, to tie the ancient myth to a modern-day story, as the tale of Medusa is one that still resonates with many women today. It is staged in-the-round where the audience surrounds the stage area, allowing for actors to use the space freely and creatively on and off the stage, and make the audience feel more submerged.

There are different interpretations of the myth, but this follows one where Athena transforms Medusa, who was a priestess for her temple, as a way to protect her so

that no man could ever harm her again. Medusa however does not realise this, and believes Athena cursed her for (unwillingly) breaking her vow of celibacy. She feels betrayed by the Goddess she spent her life serving, and has lost all faith in their integrity and goodness. Medusa becomes a rumour that warriors want to vanquish to prove they can defeat this dangerous 'past-woman'. She is ashamed of her form and powers.

Medusa is then met by a blind girl. They learn more about each other and form a strong bond. Eventually, they decide to use Medusa's power to enact revenge on all the men who have hurt and abused women, and got away with it. The girl spreads the message and women begin to convince men to unknowingly go to their deaths.

Eventually, Medusa decides to go after Poseidon and also turns him to stone. There is chaos, both on earth with the water and seas, and with the gods, who decide on vengeance. Athena volunteers.

When she finds Medusa, she explains why she transformed her; not as punishment, but as protection, and that she never thought it would lead to this. She explains that if Medusa does not die today, she will forever be tortured ruthlessly by the gods, but that she will make it quick, painless, and allow her to have the dignified death she wanted. Medusa agrees. She says that she is sorry for that everything she has had to go through, before Medusa gently dies in her arms.