



Produced by Prime Stage Theatre

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Antigone

Scene I – *(Preshow music lead to Antigone theme)*

(Oedipus, Antigone, Ismene are seen)

OEDIPUS

My child, Antigone.

Look, do you see some place to rest?

ANTIGONE

Here, father. It's a rough rock, but you have come a long way from home.

OEDIPUS

Do you know where we are?

ANTIGONE

The city is Athens, but I know not this place.

I see my sister. You'll know her at once by her voice.

OEDIPUS

Little one, why have you come?

ISMENE

Concern for you, father. Dark clouds closing in around doomed sons.

Some murderous rivalry . . . they grab for power, the scepter and the crown.

OEDIPUS

May the great gods

Never quench their blazing, fated strife!

May it rest in my hands alone –

Now their spears are lifting tip to tip

To bring their fighting to its bitter end.

My own sons, your two brothers turn their backs

On their own father for throne, for scepter.

They love the crown more than their own father.

Precious little good will ever come to them

From lording over Thebes.

Children, closer, come to your father!

Let me embrace you –

Oh, thank god for you!

My two girls, dear sisters, young as you are,

Now, even if I should die, I'm not destroyed, not utterly,

not with the two of you beside me.

ANTIGONE

Look there – coming toward us

OEDIPUS
Who is he?

ISMENE
Polynices.

OEDIPUS
My son, king – that son I hate! His words alone
Would cause me the greatest pain of any words,

ANTIGONE
Father, listen to me
Let our brother come!
Many other men have rebellious children,
Quick tempers too . . . but they listen to reason,
Look to the past, not the present, consider all

OEDIPUS
Child,
It's hard for me,
But if your heart is set,
So be it.

POLYNICES
My father!
I am the worst man alive, I swear it,
But there are cures for all past wrongs done,

What, silence?
Father, say something, anything – don't turn from me!
Nothing in answer to me? You'd reject me?

(To Antigone and Ismene)
You, my own sisters!
Rouse our father from this silence.

ANTIGONE
Brother,
Tell him yourself, exactly why you've come.
As the words flow on, they just may touch some joy
Or hit some raw nerve and lend a voice to stony silence.

POLYNICES
Then I'll speak out – you're right.
Father, I am an outcast, driven from our fatherland.
As your eldest born, I claimed the right
To sit upon your throne with all your powers.
For that Eteocles thrust me from the land –

Why do I come before you now?
 To kneel at your feet, my father! Bearing prayers,
 My own, and those of my comrades; as I march on to defeat my brother.
 We beg you now, by your own life, father, we implore you!
 Relent in your crushing rage against me,
 Without you, I am powerless – I can't survive.

OEDIPUS

You degenerate!

You, when you held the throne and scepter
 Your blood brother now holds in Thebes,
 You drove me into exile, your own father!
 And if these two girls had not been born
 I'd be as good as dead – for all you cared!
 Why, they're men, not women, when it comes
 To shouldering my burdens.

But you, my brace of boys,
 You're born of a stranger, you are no sons of mine!

And so the eyes of fate look down upon you now.
 You'll never tear that city down. No,
 You'll fall first, red with your brother's blood
 And he stained with yours – equals, twins in blood.
 You will learn, at last, to respect your parents –
 I'll teach you to heap contempt upon your father.
 My curses have you in their power now.

You – die!

Die and be damned!

(OEDIPUS *exits*)

ANTIGONE

Polynices, listen to me, I beg you

POLYNICES

My sisters,

In the name of all the gods
 If father's curses all come true
 Don't neglect me, please, give me burial,
 The honored rites of death.

ISMENE

Please, dear brother, listen!

ANTIGONE –

(*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)

Polynices,

Turn back the armies to Argos, quickly!
 Don't destroy yourself and Thebes.

POLYNICES
Unthinkable.

ANTIGONE
So, your heart is set on this?

POLYNICES
Yes – The road is waiting.
Carry out my wishes once I'm dead . . .
You can not help me any more in life.

Goodbye, dear ones.
No mourning for me now.

ANTIGONE
Who wouldn't mourn for you, Polynices?
Rushing to death with open eyes!

POLYNICES
Death – if that's my fate.

ANTIGONE
Robbed of you I might as well be dead.

POLYNICES
No,
That's in the hands of a dark power, destiny –
Whether we live or die, who knows?
But the two of you, at least,
I pray to god you never meet with harm.
The world can see you don't deserve to suffer.
(POLYNICES exits)

CHORUS
(MUSIC UNDERSCORE)
Listen,
Sounds of thunder or war
Thunder? The sky? – Oh God. . .
Where will it end? What birth will it let loose?

MESENTER
Friends
The quickest way to tell you this;
Oedipus is gone. He's left this world forever.

LEADER
How?
Some stroke of the gods and free of pain?

MESENTER
No blazing bolt of the god took him off.
No whirlwind sweeping inland off the sea
No, it was some escort sent by the gods

Or the dark world of the dead to receive him.
His departure was a marvel!

ISMENE

It breaks my heart!
What awaits us now, dear sister, what new fate?

LEADER

Come, my children,
All rests in the hands of a mighty power.
(Exits)

(THUNDER SOUNDS AND MUSIC)

Scene 2

Battle scene.

Scene 3

CHORUS - *(MUSIC UNDERSCORE)*

Glory! Great beam of the sun, brightest of all
That ever rose on the seven gates of Thebes.
 You burn through night at last!
 Great eye of the golden day.
You throw him back, the enemy of Thebes
He's now gone, before he could glut his jaws the Theban blood.
He grabbed the Dragon none can master – Thebes!
The clang of our arms like thunder at his back!

Zeus hates with a vengeance all bravado
The mighty boasts of men. He watched them
Coming on in a rising flood

But now for Victory! Glorious in the morning
Joy in her eyes to meet our joy
Now let us win oblivion from the wars,
Thronging the temples of the gods
In singing, dancing choirs
 Lord Dionysius, god of the dance
 That shakes the land of Thebes, now lead the way!

(CREON enters with EURYDICE)

Look – the king of the realm is coming
With his Queen.
Creon – the new man for the new day!
What new plan will he launch
Why this, the special session?

CREON *(MUSIC UNDERSCORE ENDS)*

 My countrymen
The ship of state is safe. The gods who rocked her

After a long, merciless pounding in the storm,
Have righted her once more.

While Oedipus steered the land of Thebes,
your loyalty was unshakeable,
Now then,
Since the two sons are dead – two blows of fate
In the same day, cut down by each other's hands,
Both killers, both brothers stained with blood,
As I am next in kin to the dead
I now possess the throne and all its powers.

CHORUS
Creon!

CREON
We have lost many loved ones.
No family has felt the harshness of fate more than our own
Having lost our nephews after losing the elder son
of your king and Queen Eurydice.

Of course you cannot know a man completely
His character, his principles, sense of judgment,
Not till he's shown his colors, ruling the people,
Making laws. Experience, there's the test.
As I see it, whoever assumes the task,
The awful task of setting the city's course,
And refuses to adopt the soundest policies
But fearing someone, keeps his lips locked tight,
He's utterly worthless. So I rate him now,
I always have. And whoever places a friend
Above the good of his own country, he is nothing:
I have not use for him.

CHORUS
Creon!

CREON
Remember this:
Our country is our safety.
Only while she voyages true on course
Can we establish friendships, truer than blood itself
Such are my standards. They make our city great.
While we mourn we must also give each other strength.
We will honor the virtuous and condemn those who threaten our peace.

CHORUS
Creon!

CREON

These are my principles as I proclaim
 Concerning the two sons of Oedipus.
 Eteocles, who died fighting for Thebes,
 Excelling all in arms, he shall be buried,
 Crowned with a hero's honors, the cups we pour
 To soak the earth and reach the famous dead.

CHORUS

Eteocles! A hero!

CREON

But as for his blood brother, Polynices,
 Who returned from exile, consumed with on desire
 To burn roofs to roots – who thirsted to drink
 His kinsman's blood
 That man – a proclamation has forbidden the city
 To dignify him burial, mourn him at all.
 No. He must be left unburied, his corpse
 Food for the birds and dogs to tear,
 An obscenity for the citizens to behold!

I have posted guards by the body of the traitor
 See that you never side with those who break my orders.
 Death is the price.

CHORUS LEADER

If this is your pleasure, Creon, treating
 Our city's enemy and our friend this way. . .
 The power is yours, to enforce it
 With the laws.

CREON

Follow my orders closely then. Be on your guard.
 These are my principles! Never at my hands
 Will the traitor be honored above the patriot.
 Whoever proves his loyalty to the state
 I'll prize that man in death as well as life.

CHORUS

Creon! Creon!
 Glory! Great beam of the sun, brightest of all
 That ever rose on the seven gates of Thebes.
 You burn through night at last!

(CREON, EURYDICE and Chorus exit)

(MUSIC UNDERSCORE FOR SCENE TRANSITION)

Scene 4

ANTIGONE

My own flesh and blood – dear sister, dear Ismene
 How many griefs our father, Oedipus handed down!
 The gods refuse to forget his sin.
 And now this. Have you heard the decree Creon
 Has just now declared for all of Thebes?

The doom reserved for enemies
Marches on the ones we love the most.

ISMENE

Not I. I haven't heard a word.
Nothing of loved ones,
No joy or pain has come my way.
If my face shows nothing, the exhaustion of grief has wiped it clean.
The city rejoices over the enemy's defeat, but I can think only
Of their final, bloody embrace.

ANTIGONE

And yet there is more. That's why I brought you out here
Past the gates, so you could hear in private.

ISMENE

What new grief could matter after this?

ANTIGONE

I, too, was like the trampled grasses after our brothers' deaths.
To kill one another over the throne of Thebes!
But now, our uncle, Creon, sets himself above the gods!
Eteocles has been given full military honors.
His spirit can join the honored dead.
But the body of Polynices lies rotting.
A city-wide proclamation forbids anyone to bury him,
Even mourn him.
He is to be left unwept, unburied, a treasure for birds
That scan the field and feast.
His spirit will wander the land, never able to join his ancestors.

Such is the martial law our good Creon
Lays down for you and me – yes, me, I tell you.
Whoever disobeys in the least will die,
His doom is sealed.

There you have it.

ISMENE

My sister, if things have come to this
Who am I to make or make them? Tell me.
What would you have us do?

ANTIGONE

Decide.
Will you share the labor, share the work?

ISMENE

What work? What do you mean?

ANTIGONE

Will you lift up his body with these bare hands
And lower it with me?

ISMENE

What? You'd bury him –
When a law forbids it?

ANTIGONE

Yes!

HE is my brother - and - your brother too.
No one will convict us for a traitor.

ISMENE

But Creon has expressly –

ANTIGONE

No!

He has no right to keep me from my own.

ISMENE

Antigone, wait!

I am too heartbroken and terrified to think clearly.
How can we be sure what is right?
My sister, think!

Look at the two of us, left so alone
Think what a death we'll die
If we violate the laws and the throne
We must be sensible.

ANTIGONE

I want justice for Polynices.

ISMENE

I too want justice for Polynices.
I want to mourn over our brothers' graves!
But remember, we are women
We are not born to contend with men. Then, too
We are underlings, ruled by much stronger hands.
We must submit in this.

ANTIGONE

Creon cannot interfere with the ceremonies of the dead.

ISMENE

I'll beg the dead to forgive me
I'm forced, I have no choice – I must obey
The ones who stand in power and live.
Why rush to extremes?
It's madness. Madness!

ANTIGONE

I won't insist
No, even if you should have a change of heart.

The very thing that holds you back, urges me on.

ISMENE

Antigone -

ANTIGONE

I will bury him myself.

ISMENE

My sister –

ANTIGONE

And even if I die in the act, that death will be a glory.

I will lie with the one I love and loved by him

An outrage sacred to the gods!

I long to please the dead more than please the living here.

In the kingdom I'll lie forever.

Do as you like. Dishonor the laws the gods hold in honor.

ISMENE

I do them no dishonor –

But defy the city? I have no strength for that.

ANTIGONE

You have your excuses. I am on my way.

I will raise a mound for him, for my dear brother.

ISMENE

At least take care. I will keep your secret.

I promise.

ANTIGONE

Dear god, shout it from the rooftops!

Silence is hateful to me

And you too will be hateful if you cower before tyranny.

ISMENE

Your passion makes you reckless. I fear for you, Antigone.

You are off to a hopeless quest.

ANTIGONE

Fear for Creon

ISMENE

But what if the only outcome of this is that you and Polynices lay unburied

And your spirits are left to wander?

You are more dear to me than anyone else.

I cannot allow that.

ANTIGONE

I will do what I must.

I know what offends the gods.

I would rather die today than live a coward's life

And suffer for eternity.

I will suffer nothing as great a death without glory. (She exits) (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)

ISMENE

Then go if you must.

But rest assured,

Wild, irrational as you are,

You, my sister, are truly dear to the ones who love you.

(She exits)

Scene 5 (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)

SENTRY

My lord,

I can't say I'm winded from running, or set out

With any spring in my legs either – no sir.

I was lost in thought, and it made me stop, often,

Dead in my tracks, wheeling, turning back,

And all the time a voice inside me muttering,

“Idiot, why? You're going straight to your death!”

Then muttering, “Stopped again, poor fool?”

If somebody gets the new to Creon first,

What's to save your neck?”

CREON

Come to the point!

SENTRY

And so,

Mulling it over, on I trudged, dragging my feet,

CREON

You can make a short road take forever.

SENTRY

But at last, look, common sense won out.

I'm here, and I'm all yours.

CREON

And . . .

SENTRY

And even though I come empty handed

I'll tell my story just the same because

I've come with a good grip on one hope

What will come will come, whatever fate –

CREON

Speak please!

SENTRY

First, myself, I've got to tell you

I didn't do it, didn't see who did –

CREON
See what?

SENTRY
Be fair, don't take it out on me!

CREON
Then fool, tell your news and be gone.
You obviously have something strange to tell.

SENTRY
Dangerous, too and danger makes me delay

CREON
Out with it!

SENTRY
All right. Here it comes.
The body –
I beseech you for fairness
The body –
Someone's just buried it, then run off.

CREON
What man alive would dare . . . ?

SENTRY
I have no idea, I swear it.
There was no mark of a spade, no pickaxe
No earth turned up. The ground packed hard and dry.
Just some sprinkled dry dust on the flesh
As if someone meant to lay the dead to rest
And keep it from getting cursed.

No tracks, no wheelruts, nothing.
No sign of human hands at work.

At sunup the first watch of the day points it out
It was a wonder! We were stunned.
At first we couldn't see the corpse
On second look it was not gone
Just a light cover of road-dust on it.
Of bird or dog, there was no sign.

But what came next!
Rough talk flew thick and fast
Guard grilling guard – we almost came to fight
Nothing to stop it. We suspected each of the deed,
But each in turn offered his alibi, pleading ignorance.

"I didn't do it. I had no hand in it!

Finally, after all this wrangling, one man spoke out
And made us stare at the ground, hanging our heads in fear of you.
Here is what he said. "Look, we've got to report the facts to Creon.
We can't keep this hidden."

Well, we took lots and I, unlucky as ever, got the prize.
So here I am. Against my will and yours, well I know.
No one wants the man who brings bad news.

LEADER

My king

Ever since he began I've been debating in my mind
Could this possibly be the work of the gods?

CREON

Stop!

Have you no more wits than this –?

You say – why it's intolerable – say the gods
Could have the slightest concern for a traitor?

Tell me –

The "hero" who came to burn their temples
Their golden treasures – scorch their hallowed earth
And fling their laws to the winds?
Exactly when did you last see the gods celebrate traitors?
Inconceivable!

No.

From the first there were certain citizens
Who could hardly stand the spirit of my regime
Grumbling against me in the dark, heads together,
Tossing wildly, never keeping their necks beneath the yoke.
These are the instigator. I'm convinced –
They have perverted my own guard, bribed them
To do their work.

Money! Nothing worse
in our lives, so rampant, so corrupting.
Money. You demolish cities, root men from their homes,
You train and twist good minds and set them on
To the most atrocious schemes. No limit!
You make them adept at every kind of outrage
Every godless crime – money!

Everyone

The whole crew bribed to commit this crime.
One thing sure at least
Sooner or later they will pay the price.

(To Sentry)

I never hoped –
Dear gods, I owe you all my thanks! (SENTRY exits)

Scene 6

CHORUS (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)

What a remarkable piece of work is man.
In the tossed waves of winter
He dares the buckling back of the sea
When the swell swirl heavy.

Year in year out his plows go back and forth
With the breed of the stallions turning up the furrows.

The birds of the air he nets and brings to earth
And the wild beasts of the hills
With nets he traps the tribe of fish from the deep
Nets fingered with skill.

He is lord over the savage mountain lion
Masters the long haired horse and the bull
That has never known the pain of the yoke.

He knows the language of the tongue
He knows the thought that has wings
He knows the passions that create cities.

And he has found refuge from the arrows
Of rain and hail.
He can do everything. And yet he can do nothing.
Nothing in the face of death that must come.

He has cursed disease
But he cannot cure death.

His mind is rich in thought
But his mind feeds on hope
But Good comes and Bad comes.

Human laws are frail.
Divine laws live in truth.
Keep the laws of the gods and cities stand high.
Cities fall when arrogant excesses keep court.

Never will the transgressor
Break bread at my table. (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE ENDS*)

Scene 7

LEADER

Here is a dark sign from the gods
What to make of this?

Look. Is it possible?

SENTRY

Here is the culprit
Taken in the act.
I discovered this girl spreading earth again on Polynices.
Where is the King?

LEADER

Back again, just in time when you need him.

CREON

In time for what?

SENTRY

My king

CREON

You again.

SENTRY

There's nothing you can swear you'll do
Second thoughts make liars of us all.
I could have sworn I wouldn't hurry back
But a stroke of luck beyond my wildest hopes
What a joy, there's nothing like it.
So back I've come breaking my oath. Who cares!

CREON

Speak. Or by my own hand –

SENTRY

I'm bringing in our prisoner – this young girl.
(MUSIC UNDERSCORE FOR ANTIGONE ENTRANCE)

CREON

Prisoner! Her?

LEADER

What means this? Antigone?

SENTRY

We took her giving the dead the last rites.

CREON

You took her – where – doing what?

SENTRY

Burying the man. That's the whole story.

LEADER

Child, did you recklessly conspire and madly brave Creon's decree?

SENTRY

Not casting lots this time, this is MY luck.
My prize. No one else's.

Now my lord,
Here she is. Take her. Question her.
Cross-examine her to your heart's content.
But set me free – it's only right.
I'm rid of this dreadful business once and for all.

CREON

You mean what you say? You are telling me the truth?
Be clear.

SENTRY

She's the one. With my own eyes I saw her
Bury the body. Just what you've forbidden.
There.
Is that plain and clear?

CREON

Do you know what you are saying? You accuse a daughter of the House of Laius.

SENTRY

I accuse nothing. I just tell you what I saw.

CREON

Tell me exactly

SENTRY

Here's what happened.
We went back to our post
Those threats of yours breathing down our necks
We brushed the corpse clean of the dust that covered it
And we took to high ground, backs to the wind
So the stink of him couldn't hit us;
The sun stood above our heads
A huge white ball in the noon sky, beating
Blazing down.
And then it happened.
Suddenly a whirlwind!
Twisting a great dust-storm up from the earth
A black plague of the heavens, filling the plain
Ripping the leaves off every tree in sight
Choking the air and sky. We squinted hard
And took our whipping from the gods.

And after the storm passed – it seemed endless –

Nor did I think your edict could override the gods.
 These laws – I was not about to break them out of fear of some man's wounded pride.

CREON

To proud and arrogant your tongue, Antigone!

ANTIGONE

With your death sentence ringing in my ear,
 If I am to die before my time
 I consider that a gain.
 And if my present actions strike you as foolish
 Let me say I have been accused of folly
 By a fool.

LEADER

Like father – like daughter.
 Passionate – wild –
 Better to beg for mercy than enrage those who love you.

CREON

Enough!

Believe the stiffest stubborn wills
 Fall the hardest.
 The toughest iron, tempered in the white hot fire
 You will see it crack and shatter first of all.

This girl, my niece, was skilled at insolence
 When she shattered the edicts we made public.
 But once she had done it – the insolence, twice over –
 To glory in it, mocking us to our face with what she has done.
 I am not the man, not now: She is the man
 If this victory goes to her and she goes free.

Never! Sister's child or closer in blood
 Than all my family clustered at my altar
 Worshipping Zeus – She will never escape,
 She and her blood sister, the most barbaric death.

Yes, I accuse her sister of an equal part
 In scheming this, this burial!

Bring forth Ismene. I saw her inside, gone to pieces.
 A guilty mind betrays the doer.
 I hate it more when a traitor, caught red-handed,
 Tries to glorify his crimes.

Bring her here! I would have a word alone
 With my sister's child.

(LEADER and Chorus exit)

ANTIGONE

Creon, what more do you want
Than my arrest and execution?

CREON

I do not wish to see you die. That is why I sent away the others.
And Haemon means to marry you. I do not care to disappoint my son, either.

ANTIGONE

Perhaps your law is not so absolute, then.

CREON

Perhaps you are not so stubborn when there is no audience.

ANTIGONE

What will you have of me, Uncle? In truth, I do not wish to be put to death.

CREON

Good. Then you must condemn your crime publicly and keep away from Polynices.

ANTIGONE

If you allow Ismene or Haemon, - or you yourself – give Polynices a proper burial.

CREON

I cannot show piety to the one who attacked the city.

ANTIGONE

He is your nephew.

CREON

Did he show piety when killing his own brother?

ANTIGONE

It is not for us to judge his life. He deserves the rites of death.
What greater glory could I win than to give my own brother a decent burial?
The citizens would all agree and praise me too
If their lips were not locked in fear.

CREON

Polynices died our enemy. And you, you show no shame –

ANTIGONE

There is no shame to honor my brother, my own flesh and blood.

CREON

Eteocles was a brother too. Cut down – facing him.
How can you render his enemy such honors -

ANTIGONE

It was his brother –

CREON

Ravaging our country!

Eteocles died fighting in our behalf.

ANTIGONE

If he had not refused to give Polynices his turn as king,
Neither one nor the other would lie low today.

CREON

Eteocles saw the weakness in divided power - and he was right.
A leader must show strength.
Eteocles was the stronger leader.
A king makes decisions for the good of the realm.

ANTIGONE

I will not trade my brother's soul for the good of the realm.
Death longs for the same rites for all.

CREON

Never the same for the patriot and the traitor.
Once an enemy, never a friend
Not even after death.

ANTIGONE

I was born to join in love, not hate –
That is my nature.

CREON

Antigone, I do not want to condemn you.

ANTIGONE

I cannot sacrifice his soul for my life.

CREON

I give you life. I will let you do your rites in secret.
In exchange, you must publicly condemn your crime and your brother's crime.
It is our fate to rule.
We cannot reveal everything we know!
There are those who would dispose of us now.
That is why you must give public support to my law and pledge that no one ever hear of our dealings.

ANTIGONE

I cannot take part in a conjurer's trick.

CREON

I offer you life and your brother honor.

ANTIGONE

Public condemnation? A private burial. Where is the honor in that?
Words carry power.

CREON

Words do carry power. I cannot show a wavering hand.

ANTIGONE

I will not show a wavering heart.

CREON

Think again –

I give you the chance to save your life. Take it!

ANTIGONE

At the price of betraying my brother's soul.

CREON

The gods will know what is in your heart.

ANTIGONE

The gods will hear the words from my mouth.

I cannot do it!

CREON (*POSSIBLE MUSIC UNDERSCORE TO LEAD UP TO ISMENE ENTRANCE*)

Then go down below and love

If love you must – love the dead!

You sour the love I feel for you.

While I am alive,

No woman is going to lord it over me.

LEADER

Ismene's coming

Wiping a sister's tears

She's under a cloud so black it's drained the pink from her cheeks.

(ISMENE enters with Chorus)

CREON

You

In my own house, you viper, slinking undetected,

Sucking my life-blood! I never knew

I was breeding twin disasters, the two of you

Rising up against my throne.

Come, tell me

Will you confess your part in the crime?

Answer me. Swear to me.

ISMENE

I did it, yes –

I share the guilt – the consequences, too.

ANTIGONE

No.

Justice will never suffer that – not you.

You were unwilling when I asked your help.

ISMENE

But now, you face such dangers . . . I am not ashamed

To sail through trouble with you.
Make your troubles mine.

ANTIGONE

Who did the work?
Let the dead and the god of death bear witness!
I have no love for a friend who loves in words alone.

ISMENE

Sister – don't reject me. Please.
I'm walking beside you now – hand in hand.
Let me die with you and honor the dead together.

ANTIGONE

You should have given your hand before.
It's too late.

ISMENE

It's never too late to be a sister.

ANTIGONE

Do not lay claim to what you never touched.
You cannot share in a deed already done.
My death is enough.

ISMENE

What do I care for life, cut off from you?

ANTIGONE

Ask Creon. Your concern is all for him.

ISMENE

Why abuse me so?
This is of no use to you now.

ANTIGONE

You're right.
If I mock you, I get no pleasure from it.
Only pain.

ISMENE

Tell me,
What can I do to help you, even now?

ANTIGONE

Save yourself. Live and remember me.
You chose to live. I chose to die.

ISMENE

Not without every kind of caution I could voice.

ANTIGONE

Your wisdom appealed to one world.- mine, another.
We each made our choice.

ISMENE

We are both guilty. Both condemned to death.

ANTIGONE

Ismene will not die until her prime comes.
I'm choosing to die today.

CREON

They are both mad. One's just shown it, the other
Has been that way since birth.

Ismene, save yourself. Your sister refuses to show the wit for self-survival.

ISMENE

How can I live alone, without her?

CREON

Her?

She no longer exists.

ISMENE

She's engaged to marry your son.
He chose her. He loves her.

CREON

There are other fields for him to plow.

ISMENE

But never as true, as close a bond as theirs.

CREON

She cannot be Death's handmaiden and Haimon's wife.

ISMENE

Dearest Haimon, your father wrongs you so!

CREON

Enough! You and your talk of marriage. Curse the marriage.

ISMENE

Creon – you will really rob your son of Antigone?

CREON

Death will destroy this marriage.

ISMENE

So it is settled, then? Antigone must die?

LEADER

Let her repent and live.

CREON

She stands convicted and unrepentant, by her own words.

Delay no more. Take them in.

From now on they will act like women.

Tie them and guard them. Even the bravest try to escape

When they see Death come for their lives.

(All exit)

Scene 8 (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)

CHORUS

Happy is the man whose life has never tasted pain.

For when a house is shaken by the gods

No generation escapes.

The curse lives, every surging onward,

Like the wave that swells

When the north winds whip the sea

And the black depths spew their sand

And the storm winds rumble off the distant cliffs.

LEADER

Time out of mind I have seen the sorrows

Of this house, seen them loom and come

Crashing down up on the children.

Grief upon grief.

CHORUS

No generation can escape. A god always strikes.

And now the last light is dimmed.

The last root of the tree of Oedipus

Is cut by the bloody knife.

The god of death will it,

Madness and Fury have made it so.

Zeus, Yours is the kingdom of Olympus'

Shining heights.

Yours the power and glory

Time past, now and forever.

But in the life of man

No pride can escape the anger of the gods.

Ambition stalks the ignorant

Until knowledge comes through fire.

The saying holds the wisdom of truth:

"The man who believes the bad to be good

Lives in the grip of the curse of god."

His pleasure is brief, his doom eternal.

LEADER

My lord, here is your only son, Haimon.

Does he come in grief for Antigone?

In anger for the loss of his bride? (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE FOR HAIMON THEME INTRODUCTION*)

(HAIMON enters)

CREON

We have no need of prophets.

We will know soon enough.

Haimon, my son. You have heard the final verdict on your bride?

Are you coming now, raving against your father?

Or do you love me, knowing that what I do is out of love for our family and our state?

HAIMON

Father, I am your son. You in your wisdom govern the city and you govern my youth,

No marriage could ever mean more to me than you.

CREON

You are the joy of my age. That's how you ought to feel within your heart,

Subordinate to your father's will in every way.

This is what a man prays for: to produce good sons –

A household full of them, dutiful and attentive,

So they can pay his enemy back with interest

And match the respect their father shows his friend.

But the man who rears a brood of useless children,

What has he brought into the world, I ask you?

Nothing but trouble for himself, and mockery

From his enemies laughing in his face.

Oh, Haimon

Never lose your sense of judgment over a woman.

The warmth, the rush of pleasure, it all goes cold

In your arms, I warn you. A worthless woman in your house

A misery in your bed.

What wound cuts deeper than a loved one

Turned against you? Spit her out,

This one glories in disobedience

Like a mortal enemy – let the girl go.

Let her find a husband among the dead.

Imagine it. I caught her in an open act of treason

She alone of all the city.

I will not break by word to Thebes. She dies.

So let her cry for mercy, sing her hymns

To Zeus who defends all bonds of kindred blood.

HAIMON

Father –

CREON

If I bring up my own kin to be rebels,
 Think what I would suffer from the world at large.
 Show me the man who rules his household well;
 I will show you someone fit to rule the state.
 That good man, my son,
 I have every confidence he and he alone
 Can give commands and take them too.

But whoever steps out of line, violates the laws,
 He'll win no praise from me. That man
 The city places in authority, his orders must be obeyed,
 Large and small
 Right and wrong.

Anarchy

Show me a greater crime in all the earth!
 Therefore we must defend the men who live by the law.
 Never let some woman triumph over us.
 Better to fall from power, if fall we must,
 At the hands of a man – never be rated
 Inferior to a woman. Never.

LEADER

To us, unless sorrow has dulled our wits, Creon's words are reasonable and wise.

HAIMON

Wisdom is the choicest gift – a treasure - of the gods.
 Far be it from me – I haven't the skill
 And certainly no desire, to tell you when, if ever,
 You make a slip in speech.

All I can do as your son is report what is being said around the city.
 You cannot know everything that people say or do
 Or find to criticize.
 People in the street dreads your glance.
 They never say anything displeasing to your face.
 But it's for me to catch the murmurs in the dark,
 The way the city mourns for this young girl.

CREON

This news, my son, is better told in private.

HAIMON

And yet, I believe they might confirm what I say.
 "No woman" they say, "ever deserved death less
 And such a brutal death for such a glorious action.
 Death? She deserves a glowing crown of gold!"
 So they say, and the rumor spreads in secret,
 Darkly . . .

CREON

(To LEADER) Is this as he says?

HAIMON

Father, you know how I prize
Your well being and your name.
I rejoice in your success.
Nothing is more precious to me in the world.
What medal of honor brighter to his children
That a father's growing glory?
It is for this reason that I speak.

Please don't be quite so single-minded
Or assume the world is wrong and you are right.
Let your stubbornness die.
The man who thinks that truth is his alone,
Who thinks his eloquence, and wisdom surpasses all,
When his world turns, finds mere emptiness.

No. It is no disgrace for a man, even a wise man
To learn many things and not be rigid.

You've seen trees by a raging winter torrent
Sway with the flood while the resistant trees be swept away.
Bend or break. The same when a man is sailing
Haul your sheets too taut, never give an inch, and
You'll capsize with the keel up and the rowing-benches under.

Father, relax your anger- Change your mind!
I'm young, but let me offer this:
It would be best if man were created with perfect wisdom.
But since this is not so, learn from others
When they speak good sense in no disgrace.

LEADER

Your son speaks good sense. You'd do well to learn from him
And you, my boy, from him. You both talk sense.

CREON

He knows little of the burdens of statecraft.
Men at our age are to be lectured, are we?
Schooled by a boy his age?

HAIMON

Only in what is right. If I seem young
Look less to my years and more to what I do.

CREON

Do? Is admiring rebels an achievement? Respecting anarchy?

HAIMON

I'd never suggest that you admire treason.

CREON

Oh?

Isn't that the sickness that has attacked Antigone?

HAIMON

The whole city of Thebes denies it!

CREON

And so is Thebes to tell me how to rule?

HAIMON

Now, who's talking like a boy?

CREON

Do I rule this city— or someone else?

HAIMON

It's no city at all when owned by one man alone.

CREON

The city is the king's. That is the law!

HAIMON

What a splendid king you'd make of a desert island.

CREON

(To Chorus)

Your mind is poisoned. You have given into a woman.

This boy is fighting on her side- the woman's side.

HAIMON

I will never give in to what is wrong.

I am on your side! Are you a woman then?

CREON

You degenerate!

Threatening me with justice, your own father?

HAIMON

I see my father offending justice – It's wrong

CREON

Wrong?

To protect my royal rights?

HAIMON

Protect your rights?

When you trample down the honors of the gods?

CREON

Would you honor those who undermine the state?

HAIMON

I offer no respect for traitors

CREON

Except Antigone.

HAIMON

No one in Thebes believes her to be a traitor.

CREON

You, you soul of corruption. The woman's accomplice.

HAIMON

You will never find be an accomplice to a criminal.

CREON

That is what she is.

And every word you say is a blatant appeal for her

HAIMON

And you, and me, and the gods.

CREON

I know things that you do not. You have no idea what it means to rule!

HAIMON

Then teach me.

CREON

Let us speak in private.

HAIMON

I cannot speak quietly while Antigone is led away.

CREON

Will you give me no opportunity to guide you?

HAIMON

You take guidance from no one but yourself. You are as stubborn as Oedipus.

CREON

Then close your ears, fool. You will never marry her – not while she's alive.

HAIMON

Then she will die – but her death will kill another.

CREON

What – threats? Are you so bold?

HAIMON

What threat?

How can I threaten ears that are shut tight?

CREON

Were you not my son, you would not still be speaking.

HAIMON

If you weren't my father, I'd say you were insane.

CREON

Don't flatter me with father.

HAIMON

You really expect to fling abuse at me

And not receive the same?

CREON

Now, by heaven, I promise you, you'll pay –

Taunting me, insulting me!

Bring her out!

She'll die now, here.

In front of his eyes, beside her groom!

HAIMON

No. She will never die beside me.

And you will never set eyes on my face again.

Rage your heart out. Rage with friends

Who can stand the sight of you.

(HAIMON exits)

LEADER

Wait. Haimon! Call him my king.

A temper young as his – hurt him once

He may do something violent.

CREON

Let him vent his fury. Let him think.

Let him do what his arrogance feeds him.

He will never save those young girls from death.

LEADER

Both of them? You intend to kill them both?

CREON

No, not Ismene. The one whose hands are clean.
You are right.

LEADER

Antigone –
What sort of death do you have in mind for her?

CREON

I will take her down some wild, desolate path
Never trod by man and wall her up alive in a rocky vault
And set out short rations. Not much.
Just enough to make her guilt clear.

There, let her pray to the one god she worships:
The god of Death. Maybe he can save her,
Or she may learn at last, better late than never,
What a waste of breath it is to honor those already dead.
(CREON exits)

Scene 9 (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)

CHORUS

Love! Invincible god!
You take whatever we possess
You sleep in the soft bed
Of a young girl's cheeks.

You can cross all oceans,
Move at ease through the wild.
Not the immortal gods,
Not Man who lives but a day
Can escape your embrace.
He who possesses you goes mad.

Even the just man loses his mind.
You twist him into injustice.

You made the quarrel
Of a father and a son.
Provoking shared blood.

Desire shines in the eyes
Of a beautiful bride,
Shines, conquers, and the ordered world
Dissolves.
For Aphrodite
Smiles as she kills.

LEADER

Ah, now *my* world dissolves.
I see Antigone
Alone.
I cannot hold back my tears.

ANTIGONE (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE- ANTIGONE THEME*)

(alone)

O tomb, my bridal-bed, my home, my prison
My everlasting watch!
I'll soon be there. Soon embrace my own,
The growing family of our dead Persephone welcomed.

I am the last and the most accursed.
For I go down before my destined time's run out.
But still I go. Cherishing one good hope:
My arrival will be dear to father,
Dear to you, my mother,
Dear to you, my loving brother, Eteocles,

Polynices – Sweet Polynices – you know the price I paid because I laid your body out,
This is my reward.
Nevertheless, I honored you without fear – the decent will admit it.
In the eyes of the wise, what I did was right.

If a child of mine had died or its father, I would not have broken the state's decree.
What makes me think this way?

If a husband had died I might find another. But I can never have another brother.
That is why I risked my life for you, dear Polynices.

For this, Creon, the king, our uncle, judges me a criminal
Guilty of dreadful outrage, my dear brother.
Calls me wrong, arrogant.
And now he leads me off, captive in his hands.

I will know no marriage bed, hear no bridal song,
Take no husband in my arms, nor hold a baby to my heart.
I descend alive to the caverns of the dead.

What law of the mighty gods have I broken?
I have done no wrong!
Why look to the heavens any more.
Whom to call.
They care nothing for me.
I followed the laws of the gods
And I am condemned for ungodliness!

If gods believe this sentence just,
I will learn the truth in death.

But if this man is the guilty one, may his punishment equal mine.

(CREON and chorus enters)

ANTIGONE

No one to weep for me, my friends.
The road lies open, waiting.
No tears for the destiny that is mine
No loved one mourns my death.

CREON

Take her away, quickly!
Well her up in the tomb. You have your orders.
Abandon her there, alone, and let her choose –
Death or a buried life with a good roof for shelter.
As for myself, my hands are clean. This young girl,
Dead or alive, she will be stripped of her rights,
Her stranger's rights, here in the world above.

ANTIGONE

Thebes! My father's city!
I am led away and there is no more time.
Look on me now.
I am the last of the throne of kings.
Remember my suffering and who inflicted it.
Because I would not break the laws of god.

LEADER

Still the same rough winds, the wild passion
Raging through this girl.

CREON

Take her away!
You are wasting time.
No work of hope.
Your doom is sealed.

(ANTIGONE is taken away)

Scene 10 (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)

CHORUS

My child, our child.
Danae suffered like you
Locked in a prison of bronze,
Both bedchamber and tomb.
She was a princess, too.
In her, Zeus sowed his seed
In a shower of gold.

Fate moves on relentless.
Man cannot hide
Not Wealth nor War

Nor castle Walls
 Can escape its power.
 There is a place where black rocks divide the sea
 And murderous straits
 Split the coast of Thrace
 A forbidding city stands.
 There the savage god of war
 Watched the blood wounds dealt to infant eyes,

They wailed in agony, cries echoing cries.
 Their mother doomed to chains
 Walled up in a tomb of stone.
 She traced her birth back to a proud Athenian line
 But even her,
 On her,
 the Fates,
 The gray everlasting Fates rode hard.
 My child, our child. (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE CHANGES TO SET UP TIRESIAS*)
 (TIRESIAS enters with a child)

TIRESIAS
 Thebes – here we come. Two see with the eyes of one.
 (CREON enters)

CREON
 What is it, old Teirsias? What news?

TIRESIAS
 I am here to teach you. And you obey the seer.

CREON
 I have always listened to your advice.

TIRESIAS
 And so you keep the city straight on course.

CREON
 I owe you a great deal. I swear to that.

TIRESIAS
 Then beware. There is a razor at your throat.

CREON
 What is this? I shudder to hear you.

TIRESIAS
 You will learn when you listen to the warnings of my craft.
 I sat as of old in the secret haven where every bird I know
 Will hover at my hands – Suddenly I heard it.
 A strange voice in the wing beats
 Cries I have never known.
 Barbaric, mad and inarticulate.

I could hear the murderous tearing of their talons,
 Heard the dying of their wings.

I was afraid.

I turned quickly and lit a fire of sacrifice upon the altar
 But no fire.
 The god in the fire never blazed. No fire!
 The rites failed that might have blazed the future
 With a sign. So I learned from the child here who wept
 As he saw the effect on my face – filled with terror
 for the gods reject our offering.
 Here is my guide as I am a guide to others.

CREON

What is the meaning of this?

TIRESIAS

The gods are deaf to our prayers.
 The birds cry in the air, but I do not understand their cries
 For they are gorged with the oozing blood of the dead.
 Think about these things, my son.
 All men make mistakes.
 But a wise and determined man will change
 The course when he knows that he is wrong.
 He will cure the sickness.

I mean you well. I give you good advice.
 It's best to learn from a good adviser
 When he speaks from your own good.

CREON

You speak for my own good? Old man – all of you.
 You shoot your arrows at my head like archers at a target.
 And now you aim your seer craft at me.
 I know you and your so-called art. You treat me like merchandise
 To be bought and sold.
 Make your filthy money, trade in gold from India if that is your business.
 You will never buy that body a grave.
 Not even if Zeus's eagles rip the corpse
 And wing their rotten pickings off to the throne of god!

TIRESIAS

It is for that that the gods are paying us back.
 Pride and stubbornness – those are your faults my son.
 No. Yield to the dead.
 Never stab a fighter when he's down.
 Where's the glory, killing the dead twice over?
 It is the foolish man who keeps inviting more tragedy.

CREON

Never, not even in the fear of such defilement
 Will I tolerate his burial, that traitor.

Well I know, we cannot defile the gods
No mortal has the power.

Old Teirsias,
All men fall. It is only human.
But it is shameful when wise men
Sell their knowledge, tell lies to make a profit for their own gain.

TIRESIAS
Oh god, is there a man alive
Who knows, who actually believes what I tell

CREON
Tell what? What trite pearl of wisdom do you have now?

TIRESIAS
. . . just how much a sense of judgment, wisdom is the greatest gift we have?.

CREON
And that to be a fool is a most dangerous thing?

TIRESIAS
You are the fool. That is your sickness.

CREON
I will not trade insults with a blind old bat.

TIRESIAS
You have already, calling my prophecies a lie.

CREON
And why not?
Prophets! You and the whole breed of seers are mad for money!

TIRESIAS
Tyrants! All you think of is power!

CREON
Are you aware you are speaking to the king?

TIRESIAS
Well aware. Who helped you to the throne?

CREON
You have your skills, old seer, but you have become corrupt.

TIRESIAS
You drive me to speak the dreadful secret in my heart.

CREON
Spit it out! Just don't speak it for profit.

TIRESIAS

Profit? No, Not a bit of profit – not for you.

CREON

Know full well, you will never buy off my resolve.

TIRESIAS

Then know this too. Learn this by heart!
 The chariot of the sun will not race through
 So many circuits more, before you pay with the blood
 Of your own blood. A corpse for corpses given in return,
 Since you have thrust to the world below a child sprung for the world above.

Then you have robbed the gods below the earth
 Keeping a dead body in the bright air
 Unburied, unsung, unhallowed by rites.

This is violence
 You have forced upon the heavens.
 And so the avengers, the dark destroyers late
 But true to the mark, now lie in wait for you.
 The Furies sent by the gods and the god of death
 To strike you down with the pains that you perfected.

There. Reflect on that. Tell me I have been bribed.
 My ears ring with the cries from your house.
 The day comes soon when the mourning cries for men and women
 Break through your halls. Great hatred rise against you. Cities in tumult.
 The stench of your sin will settle on the earth.

Yes, I am an archer. My arrows are for your heart!
 You will never escape their burning, searing force.

Come, boy. Take me home
 So he can vent his rage on younger men
 Let him still his angry tongue and learn truth.

(TIRESIAS exits)

LEADER (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)

My king. Terrible prophecies
 But the truth remains
 He has never lied to Thebes.

CREON

I know it. I'm shaken, torn.
 It is a dreadful thing to yield . . . but resist now?
 Let my pride bare to the blows of ruin
 That's dreadful, too.

LEADER

But good advice, Creon
Take it now. You must.

CREON
What should I do?
Tell me. I'll listen.

LEADER
Go! Free the girl from the rocky vault
And raise a mound for the body of her brother that you exposed.

CREON
That's your advice? You think I should give in?

LEADER
Yes, my king. And quickly.
Destruction falls heavy upon the fools of this earth.

CREON
I've not achieved what I have gained by surrendering.
It's hard to deny what I believe in.

But I will do it
I will no more fight a losing battle with Destiny.

LEADER
You must do it now. Go. You cannot leave it to others.

CREON
I am on my way!
Come, each of you
Take up axes, spades, to tear the rocks from her tomb
I and my better judgment have come round to this
I imprisoned her – I will set her free.
The laws of the gods are old, mighty,
And a man must serve them till his death.
(CREON and others exit)

Scene 11 (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)

CHORUS
Dionysus! God of our city! God of many names!
Oh help us now!
Bacchus! You wash your body in our sacred waters.
Women wild with your will within them
Whirl in the night of the seed of dragons!

Help us now!
God of many names!

We cry your name aloud!
You are our god, our Lord of Thebes

This is your city.
 Thebes where your mother birthed and died.
 Heal us now, Heal us now.
 Come to us across the grieving seas,
 You make the stars dance in the black sky of night.
 You hear the echo of eternal silence.
 Son of Zeus, bring the whirlwind of your ecstasy
 And help us now!

MESENTER (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE CHANGES TO SET UP THE HORROR OF THE NEXT SCENE*)

Neighbors

Friends of the house of Cadmus and the kings,
 There's not a thing in this mortal life of ours
 I'd praise or blame as settled once for all.

Fate can bless a man, and Fate can ruin the happy man.
 Who knows what Fate will bring.
 Take Creon: He was envied once.
 His life was good. HE saved the realm from enemies,
 He alone set us true on course. HE flourished like a strong tree
 With the noble line of sons he bred and reared
 And now it's gone – all gone.

Live life like a king. But if real delight is missing
 I wouldn't give you a wisp of smoke for it.

LEADER

What ill tidings do you bring?

MESENTER

Dead. Dead. And the living are guilty of their death!

LEADER

Who's the murderer? Who is dead? Tell us.

MESENTER

Haimon is gone. His blood spilled by the very hand –

LEADER

His father's or his own?
 Raging made with his father for the death –

CHORUS

Teirsias ! You saw and told the truth!

LEADER

Here is Eurydice – Creon's wife.
 So close at hand.

EURYDICE

I heard your words as I was coming to pray at Athena's shrine.
 When a voice filled with sorrow, family sorrow,
 Struck my ears. I couldn't catch every word, Only one. Haimon.

Please. If someone knows, tell me the news, whatever it is . . .
Sorrow and I are hardly strangers.

MESSENGER (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)

Dear mistress, I was there.
I will tell you what you wish, though it breaks my heart to do so.
Truth is always best.

I followed the king to the edge of the plain where Polynices' body lay
Torn by the dogs and still unmourned.
WE offered a prayer to Hecate and Hades that they might accept his soul and be merciful to our state.

We washed the body in a bath of holy water, then we covered him with a mound of earth
Of the land where he was born and turned toward the rocky vault of Antigone.

As we drew near, one heard a wail echoing out of that chamber.
A sob broke in my heart, dear Queen, for I recognized your son's cry.

EURYDICE

Haemon. What has he done?

MESSENGER

Creon cried out, "Oh, god, am I the prophet now? My son – it's his dear voice
He greets me! Go men, quickly. Tear the rocks aside.
Look – see if it's Haemon's voice I hear
Or have the gods robbed me of my senses."
We ran like those pursued by wolves and
In the far corner of the tomb we saw her.
Hanged by the neck in a noose made by own linen veil.
The boy, his arms flung around her waist,
Clinging to her, wailing for his bride.

When Creon saw him, he gave a deep sob
Ran in, shouting, crying out to him,
"Come out my son. I beg of you!"

The boy gave him a wild burning glance, as grief turned to fury.
Haemon cursed his father and spat in his face.

EURYDICE

Haemon. My son!

MESSENGER

Haimon drew his sword and lunged, his father stepped aside and ran
But Haemon, having missed his change for vengeance, desperate with himself
Suddenly pressed against the sword, leaning his full weight on the blade.

EURYDICE

No!

MESSENGER

Still conscious, folded Antigone close in his arms

He embraced the girl, and breathing hard released a rush of blood
Bright red on her cheek glistening white.

There they lay – body enfolding body
He has won his bride at last, poor boy

Creon shows the world that of all the ills
Afflicting men, the worst is lack of judgment.
(EURYDICE exits)

LEADER
What do you make of that? The lady's gone
Without a word, good or bad.

MESSENGER
I don't know what to think.
But here's my hope that she grieves in private for her son.
She won't do anything rash.

LEADER
I'm not so sure. Forced silence is more ominous than excessive tears.

MESSENGER
You may be right. Even too much silence has its dangers.
(CREON enters)

LEADER
The king himself!
Holding the boy in his arms.

CREON (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE*)
So senseless, so insane . . . my crimes,
My stubborn, deadly –
Look at us, the killer, the killed.
Father and son. The same blood.
My plans, my mad fanatic heart,
My son, cut off so young.
Ai. Dead. Lost to the world
Not through your stupidity, no, my own.

LEADER
Too late you see what justice means.

CREON
Oh I've learned
Though blood and tears! Then, it was then,
When the god came down and struck me – a great weight.
Shattering, driving me down that wild savage path,
Ruining, trampling down my joy. Oh the heartbreaking
Agonies of our lives.

MESSENGER (enters)
 Sire, what grief you have.
 Half the sorrow in your hands
 The other half still in your house.

CREON
 What is worse than this?

MESSENGER
 The queen is dead.
 The mother of this boy.
 The suicidal thrust
 Dead for whom she loved.

CREON
 No. No!
 Harbor of Death, why me? Why are you killing me?
 Herald of pain, more words, more grief?
 I died once, you kill me again and again!
 A son dead and now a wife!
 Slaughter heaped on slaughter.
 (EURYDICE's body is revealed)

MESSENGER
 Now you see. All is in the light.

CREON
 A second loss to break the heart.
 What next. What fate waits for me?

I just held my son in my arms and now
 I look upon the body of my wife.
 Pity the mother, pity the son!

How did she end her life?

MESSENGER
 She drove home to the heart with her own hand,
 Once she learned her son was dead.
 Then with her dying breath – she called down
 Torments on your head –

CREON
 The guilt is all mine –
 Can never be fixed on another man,
 No escape for me. I killed you,
 I, god help me, I admit it all!
 (CREON Kneels over the body of Haimon)

Come, let it come! The best of fates for me
That brings the final day, best fate of all

LEADER

That will come when it comes;
We must deal with all that lies before us.
The future rests with the ones who tend the future.

CREON

That prayer – I poured my heart into that prayer!

LEADER

No more prayers now. For mortal men
There is no escape from what we must endure.

CREON

Lead me away, a rash indiscriminate fool!
I murdered my son, against my will and my wife.
Wailing wreck of a man,
Whom to look to? Where to lean for support?
To live with myself is the most bitter sentence of all

LEADER

And most bitter is the penalty we draw upon ourselves.

CREON

Whatever I touch goes wrong. Once more
A crushing fate's come down upon my head.

CHORUS (*MUSIC UNDERSCORE – ANTIGONE THEME*)

Wisdom is by far the greatest part of joy,
And reverence toward the gods must be safeguarded.
The mighty words of the proud are paid in full
With mighty blows of fate, and at long last
Those blows will teach us wisdom.
Wisdom.

(*MUSIC UNDERSCORE CLOSSES THE STORY*)