

Antigone

A Modern Linguistic Parallax Interpretation and Stage Adaptation of the
Classical Theban Tragedy by Sophocles

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Preface

There have been only a few moments of cultural renaissance and human transcendence in the history of human civilization, like the forging of the American government during the American revolution, the English Renaissance, and the birth of tragedy in Greece, during which human creative spirit has been allowed free reign over the politics and ideological conventions of state. Thespi was a lyric singer of tales and poet of 6th Century Greece who wandered from village to village in a cart, putting on singing competitions upon the round threshing floors that dotted the valleys of rural Greece. Thespi is credited with the development of the first dramatic dialogue in dithyrambic form in which a chorus of fifty men or boys, dressed in goat costumes, sang and danced counterpoint to poems of a chorus leader, or choragus, in Spring festival rites to the God Dionysius. The prize for winning these competitions was a kid goat, and so popular did these competitions become in Greece that within a century the festival ceremonies developed into full blown Greek Tragedy and Comedy in open air amphitheatres in the Greek city-states. The word "Tragedy" in Greek means "goat song." In Athens, Greek Tragedy achieved the symbolic ceremonial status equivalent to the Olympic Games, and the successful playwright received broad acclaim as a culture hero, while the winning choragus was awarded the privilege of erecting a public statue in his honor.

Athenian playwright, general and statesman, Sophocles, about a century after Thespi, introduced significant innovations to tragedy, reducing the chorus to 15 players including the choragus, creating background scenery, and adding a third actor in dialogue, fundamentally shifting the dramatic focus from

the sacred and religious dithyrambs (songs to Dionysis) of the chorus to the secular dialogic concerns of the individual and the state. The chorus came to represent the voice of the community against which the actions of the individual character were weighed, contextualizing the play in the larger social world of the Greeks, and allowing for audience speculation and social commentary on the moral and ethical obligations of their world--the rights of the individual were continuously weighed against the obligations of society and the traditional claims of the Gods. Antigone, written in about 441 BC, was the first of Sophocle's Theban plays, and remains one of the greatest plays ever written in the Western Tradition. In this reenactment of Antigone, our students, as true Thespians, are reenacting the very birth of Western Drama and, in essence, they are thus celebrating of the birth of Western Civilization.

Dramatic Notes

The play was written based on several different translations from the original Greek, with the idea of restoring some sense of the lyrical-metric quality of the original play. The role of the guard or sentry was divided into two guards, primarily for the purposes of production by a younger middle school/High School cast.

Chorus normally sang and competed with dance performances, lead by the Choragus who was usually a professional performer. Singing was probably sweetly melodic and rhythmical, but these qualities are difficult to translate in a modern, non-Greek form. The lyrical qualities of the original Greek dithyramb are lost to us today, but allow for considerable poetic and dramatic license in individual and group interpretation. Chorus members may have danced and sang individually, in groups, in unison, with or without tambourines, flutes, drums. We chose a basic choral chanting for the strophe and anti-strophe, with rising and falling notes on every other line, indicated in the text of the chorus by rising and falling arrows.

The play as it was originally conceived and developed had minimal stage props with a semi-thrust stage design that integrated the traditional theater stage with the audience, who were to sit in bleachers in a semi-circle around the song-dance area of the chorus. Actors like Antigone, the Sentries, and Teireisias with the little boy were to enter and exit at times up center theater aisle from the back of the theater, bringing the entire theater area, with the audience, into the play.

The designs of the props were taken from pictures primarily from ancient Greek pottery pieces of the era depicting actors and their stage. Five main props were used--a high central double door with frame, made of reddish wood decorated with white circle motifs along the top, bottom and middle, pulled open by a metal ring suspended in the upper half of the doors; two side entrances made up of Greek columns made of wood supporting porticos, all painted white; a central set of steps that mounted from the theater to the stage, primarily for Choragos to mount and mediate between stage and theater; and a hand cart for carrying the body of expired Haimon from the rear of the theater up center theater.

Costumes were made in the style of peplos and unadorned Greek togas. Guards were given helmets, swords and spears. In general the theater was to be darkened with spot-lighting from above the bleachers and back-stage to highlight the performance and movement of the various actors. Greek masks and pottery were to be suspended from stage, as well as Greek shields in various locations. Backstage was to be hidden by dark sheets with backlighting.

Dramatis Personae

Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta

Ismene, sister of Antigone

Creon, new King of Thebes, Jocasta's brother and Antigone's
uncle

Eurydice, Creon's wife

Haimon, son of Creon and betrothed to Antigone

Teiresias, a prophet

A **Boy** guiding and seeing for Teiresias

First Sentry

Second Sentry

A **Messenger**

Chorus of Theban Elders, divided into Strophe and Anti-strophe

Choragus, leader of the Chorus who communicates with the actors

Servants

Leader of the Guards

Guards

Prologue

Choragus:

Legendary Oedipus,

Late King of Thebes

His own father, Laius

Unwittingly he has murdered

And Jocasta, his own mother unbeknownst

Has he then married

Thus, poor Oedipus

Shamed in the eyes of Mt. Olympus

His own vision sacrifices

By the point of his blade

His life forever forfeit by exile self-imposed

And Poor Jocasta, both his wife and mother

By her own hand fashions the noose of eternal shame

Eteocles and Polynieces
Their pair of sons
And Antigone and Ismene
The other pair of daughters
By strange and horrible fate
Thus left joyless behind
In a world bereft
Of love and happiness

Two sons
Both struggle for the Crown of Thebes
Eteocles wins the day
And drives Polynieces away
Who then, with Six Foreign Princes allied
Forms the Army of Argive
And marches back to reclaim his lost Crown

In the heat of battle
Before the Gates of Thebes
Both brothers

Embraced forever in mortal combat
Each slaying the other
Each a mirror of the other's martial fate
Leaving their Uncle Creon
Brother of Jocasta
Next in Royal Line
To Take the Throne of Thebes

The New King
Sunrise after the great siege
Issues his First Royal Decree
Celebrating the heroic death of Eteocles
Martyr of his State
With a royal funeral
And for his brother, the traitor Polynieces
His body abandoned without honor
To the birds and dogs of the field
An ignoble fate in defiance of the wisdom of the Gods
Without burial or rites of interdiction
Upon pain of official death

Antigone
Betrothed to Haimon
Son of Creon
Now Crown Prince of Thebes
Duty bound by deeper love
And reverence for the Gods
To bury the body of her vanquished brother
Polynieces

**(Antigone and Ismene, entering from the side door left of the
King's Palace, and coming down to the mid-steps)**

Antigone:

Come
Ismene
My dear sister,
Come.

By the hand of Zeus
Have we not already suffered enough

The curse of our father
Upon the house and head of Oedipus

Now, no grief, no shame
No tragedy leaves us alone
But hounds us to our final end
No news of our new King's decree?

Ismene:

Nothing
Good or Bad
Have I heard
But of a double death
In a single hour
Two sorrowful sisters
Losing two brave brothers
Each by the other's hand
And the defeated Army of Argive
Fleeing in the night

Antigone:

So thought I

And so I asked you to come with me

Beyond the King's gates

A secret errand duty bound

Ismene:

What strange mischief now misfortune makes

That stealing in the night my sister undertakes?

Antigone:

Hear me

Ismene

Know a sister's duty

To our dear dead brothers

Creon buries Eteocles

With full glory

A hero's funeral

Poor Polynieces

Equally brave

By Creon's own decree

The body to be left to the birds and dogs

Unmourned this fateful morning

Upon penalty of being stoned

In the public square

(Antigone, Pointing to down theater center)

There now lies his body

And here, sisters to be true

Or forever to our own house traitors

Ismene:

Madness, you firebrand

What can we do to change this fate?

Antigone:

Decide now

To share my fate

Risking mortal disobedience

To our new found state

Ismene:

I don't yet understand

What danger do you plan?

Antigone:

To bury the body of our dear brother

By this hand of mine.

Ismene:

Bury our brother
Against the King's new law?

Antigone:

My brother the body is yet
Though you would it not
A true sister is duty bound not to abandon him
To the animals of the field

Ismene:

Oh what mortal danger
To fly in Creon's face
Like some foreign stranger
Who unwittingly flaunts his royal grace!

Antigone:

The King has no right
Nor might
To come between me and mine
Or between the time-honored edicts
Of both the underworld and heaven

Brother and sister
Forever bound in sacred duty together
By an ancient custom
Stronger than his first decrees

Ismene:

Oh my sister,
Has not enough suffering
Been visited upon our house
In horror of his own deeds
Good King Oedipus
Our now dead father
Wrapped in the robe
Of his unheavenly disgrace
Vision pricked out
By the tip of his own blade
Our mother
Her neck strangled by the twisted cord
Of her own fashioning
And how now
Death of our two brothers

Each by the other's hand
Within an hour of a single day
All the hubris of our own dear family
A suicidal nemesis
At the foot of Mt. Olympus

Just think, dear Sister
Only both of us are left
And how much worse yet
Might be our new found fates
If we now defy
Our just sworn Sovereign's Authority
Risking once again
The sharpened points of his royal crown.

Remember we are only women
Not made to fight like men
Fortunate might makes unfortunate right
And makes us bow like cowards to our destiny
Worse than a hero's death

I beg forgiveness and make my vows
Before the Saints of Death below
And yield on my knees
To Creon's unholy decrees
It does not do to meddle with fate
Or the royal business of state

Antigone:

So it is,
Sister
This choice you have made
Do not call me back,
Even if me you need
Do as you please!
To my dead brother
I bow down on my knees
Even if by doing so
I must also in death lie
By my brother's side
Holy is this my crime

And unholy his official decree!
In death I shall be closer to my dear brother
And it is the honored dead who live the longer
In our memories
Than those living in disgrace
We always die but live only once
Do as you will as the will of the Gods means nothing to you!

Ismene:

Know you the strength of my piety
Before the all seeing eyes of heaven,
But weak am I before the arms of the state
To break unholy laws made for all of us

Antigone:

Excuse yourself in what manner of apology you wish
But I cannot myself apologize
For the duty of my brother's holy burial

Ismene:

Sad I am for you
Dearest Antigone
And so afraid!

Antigone:

Afraid you need not be,
You have to consider yourself, after all!

Ismene:

At least let no one else know what you do
Cloak it in darkness
And I shall in darkness keep it too!

Antigone:

Oh no, go and shout it out
Tell all you know about it,
and remember how they'll despise you as well
When they find out you knew about it also

Ismene:

Blind are you in madness
Such a firebrand to me
When in the coldness
Of mortal fear you should be!

Antigone:

Perhaps,
but my duty must I do!

Ismene:

Can you really do it?
I say you cannot do it
Even if you tried!

Antigone:

I shall then do what I can
Until I can in weakness do no more!

Ismene:

We should not try to do the impossible.

Antigone:

Go away now,
Dear Ismene,
Or soon I shall hate you so
As the dead will also
Your words are as hateful as my plan is foolish
I fear no danger even if it ends in death,
For it will not be a dishonorable deed!

Ismene:

Go to your honorable fate, then
If you must do your holy duty

Unwise are you to the living this day

Even if loyal to the dead you stay

**(Ismene watches as her sister exits off stage down the center
isle of the audience towards back theater, and then turns back
into the palace gate)**

Parados, or Ode of Entrance

Strophe 1

Chorus:

Golden light rays

Of the newly rising **Sun** ↑

Revealing the Royal glory

Of the Seven Theban **Gates** ↑

All eyes open to the light of approaching day

Marching across the waters of Dirce's **stream** ↑

Striking the snowy shields of the foe

Thrown back in blinding **confusion**

At the approach of the royal **Sun!** ↑

Choragus:

Polynieces

Their dauntless leader

Harangued them back with fearless phrase

Like a flying eagle

Screaming wild insults across our land

His wings their snowlit shields

His crest their tufted helms

Antistrophe 1

Chorus:

Against our seven gates

In a yawning **ring**↓

Famished spears enclosed in the night

But before our blood **devouring**↓

Or pine-pitch our towers firing

The bronze ring was **broken**, ↓

The tightening noose thrown off

And turning their **shields**↓

Great Thebes,

Not a sacrificial lamb for his loud **lamentations**,
But Rising loud as a dragon with the thunder of **war** ↓

Choragus:

The Gods despise utterly
Wagging, Bragging tongues
And brash deeds without heed
And when the Gods saw them laughing
Swaggering with their golden helmets and snow-white shields
Blasted the first one from our walls
With raging thunder

Strophe 2

Chorus:

Heard we the triumphant eagle's cry
High up in the **sky** ↑
Turning to screams of terror
Falling far out in a flaming **arch** ↑
With his windblown torch
Stricken by the **earth** ↑
And others, in the fury of the storm

Found their stock in **death**↑

No less than his

In the dusty joyful midst of **battle**↑

Choragus:

Seven Captains, Champions

Dueling at the Seven Gates

Threw down their clanging arms

To the Gods that bend and snap the battle-lines

Yet two brothers only remained

Locked arm and arm in mortal rage

Face-to-face looking upon other's death mask

Remaining long in unending combat

Until brother killed brother

-

Antistrophe 2

Chorus:

Now let

Triumphant celebration be ours

In this beautiful victorious **morning**↓

Let all of Thebes

Proud city of many War Chariots ↓

Sing Paeans for Joy!

With glad hearts and dancing we take our leave of war ↓

Hymns of praise shall rise like smoke from all the altars

And long shall this night echo with our songs! ↓

Choragus:

At last

our new King comes

Creon of Thebes

Son of Meoikeus

In the auspicious dawn

Of his reign

Borne on fortune's wings

Fickle fate

Fashioned by the Gods

What new things

Betoken our state

That shifting sands of fortune and fate

Have woven for him?

What be his counsel,

And why summon he the elders to listen?

First Episode

(Enter Creon from the Central Palace Doors, Center Stage. He addresses the Chorus from the top step)

Creon:

My Honored Gentlemen

The storm is overpassed

And the Gods have brought our ship safely to port

I summon all of you together

This bright young day

Because to the house of Laios

I know your loyalty

Your obedience to our King Oedipus,

and then to his Sons,

and now, surviving this most recent crises of state,

Bequeathed the royal scepter am I

But you do not know as yet

The kind of King I may be

I'm not a man to shun sound advice
Or to put friendship before the interests of the state.

Before Olympus I swear
That I will not fail to warn you
Of storms approaching our ship
Nor have I ever dealt with foes of our state
I value friendship,
But not more than I value
The good working order of our ship of state

So I decree, based upon these principles
Good Eteocles who died honorably for his countrymen
Shall be buried our hero with full military honors
But his brother, Polynieces,
Who his exile broke and returned allied with our enemies
to make war upon our state
His own homeland and the temples of his own family
He who aimed to spill his own kinsmen's blood
To force his own people into slavery

His body we forbid to bury,
But be put upon the plains
So the birds and dogs of the field
Scavenge and scatter his remains

This is my command
Its wisdom is clear
As long as I am King
I will serve him no honor
Of his own state a traitor
But he who serves his land
Shall have my respect
And the reverence of all my people

Choragus:

If that is the will of the King
It is our will too, as you are our King
With the might of your wrath
Over living and the dead!

Creon:

This is my will.

Be sure to serve your King well.

Choragus:

Old are we,

So let youngsters carry out your will.

Creon:

You misunderstand

Sentries have already been ordered the undertaking

To guard that corpse from burial

Choragus:

Then what would you have us do?

Creon:

You will lend no hand to anyone who breaks my law

Choragus:

Only a mad man loves his own death!

Creon:

And death shall it be

Yet money can whisper

Even in the face of death

And the wise may lose count of their coins

(Enter Two Sentries from Theater center, walking slowly)

First Sentry:

News I bring

But not on fast feet

My silence not from lost breath

By running in a hurry

Though wishing to run away

From certain trouble

But then another voice kept me going

What if the King heard the news first

From some other person

Then so much more trouble

Might there have been

Good sense

I hope prevails

With news that makes no sense

And so I tell my story

Whatever happens will happen....

Creon:

To the point, Man

Tell the story

Second Sentry:

It was not I who did it

Nor did I see who did it

I cannot be blamed for other's misdeeds

Creon:

A blanket excuse, perhaps,

But come to the point!

First Sentry:

Something most dreadful...

How can I put it?

Creon:

Out with it or out with your tongue!

First Sentry:

The dead man....

Polyneices....

Someone.....

New dust on rotten flesh....

Someone.....

Has given it burial.....

And disappeared....

Creon:

Who dared do this?

Second Sentry:

Swear I know not,

Believe me good King

The ground was dry and unbroken

Not a trace of mattock

Nor track in the dust

Upon our morning relief

The sergeant saw it

There.....

The strangest sight.....

Look over there...

Do you see.....

The body mounded over with a light dust

Not truly buried, but veiled

Just enough to give peace to a ghost

No sign of wild animals

And then what a ruckus
With every one of us
Blaming each the other
Accusing, proving one another was responsible
But all had proof
That none of us were the culprit
Ready were we to prove our innocence
By taking a firebrand in the hand,
Or walking in fire
Making oaths before the Gods!

And then we stopped
The news had to be told you
But all we could do was hang our heads
And stare at the ground
We threw the dice
To see who should be so unfortunate
To carry this news
And the errand fell to we two
No one likes the bearer of bad tidings

Choragus:

Oh King,

I wonder if this is not the mischief of the Gods?

Creon:

Shut Up!

Must you doddering old fools

Be completely out of your heads?

"The Gods?"

How would the Gods favor this corpse,

That in life tried to loot their temples and burn their images?

No!

From the start,

There have been those whispering between themselves

Anarchists

Scheming in Alleys

Against the state

These are the culprits

And with bribes they wooed my guards

Money!

Nothing in the world corrupts like money!

The whole world thus lead astray

Away with the hearth and home

Away with the state

All for the sake of money!

But you! (**pointing to the sentry**)

I swear to the Gods

The one who did this deed shall pay

Find him, and bring him before me,

Or your own death will be the last of your problems!

You will discover who is your true employer

Strung up before you finally expire

And you will learn a lesson, too dear is the ultimate profit!

Fortune lost is misfortune won!

Second Sentry:

May I speak, My King?

Creon:

Your voice already disturbs me!

Second Sentry:

My voice, or your conscience?

Creon:

My God, you seek to question your King?

Second Sentry:

Is it what I say that hurts or what has been done?

Creon:

Talk you too much!

Second Sentry:

Perhaps, but nothing have I done!

Creon:

Except sold your soul for a pocketful of silver

That's what you've done!

Second Sentry:

Dreadful is the right judge who judges wrongly

Creon:

Entertain yourself now

With your play on words

But if you do not bring me the one responsible for this crime

You will find little entertainment from them in the end!

(Exit Creon back into the Palace)

First Sentry:

"Bring me the one!"
I'd like nothing better
But bring him or not
This is the last of me here
And I'm still safe!

ODE I

Strophe I

Chorus:

Nature's designs are a wonder boundless
But nothing is more wonderful than **man** ↑
The leaden seas
Yield to the ship's **pro**w ↑
Borne by a southern wind
Crests bear him on **high** ↑

Holy, fertile earth plowed

With fresh **furrows**↑

Where his plow has passed

Year-by-**year**

Laboring his horses **endlessly**↑

Antistrophe 1

The small birds and beasts that hide in the field

The fast fish swimming in the many **waters**↓

All are taken in by the net of man's mind

The lion roaring from the **hilltop**↓

Deer roaming the forests

The wild horse running across the **fields**↓

All yield to his will and design

The mountain bull bowed to his blunt **yoke**↓

Strophe 2

Quick tempered words,

and faster **thoughts**↑

He spins to his own ends

His are grand state **considerations**↑

Keeping out the snow and the rain

His **constructions**↑

Block the wind from every direction

Securing **himself**↑

Inside his house

Provident from disease and **hunger**↑

From everything

Except the last sigh of **death**↑

Antistrophe 2

Intelligence beyond imagination

More powerful than any **force**↓

Suffering a maze of double fate

Both good and **evil**↓

Stands his proud land safely

When laws are **kept** ↓

Shameless suffers his city

When laws are **broken** ↓

Never can the ambitious find comfort at my fire

Never can the lawless share in my **thoughts** ↓

Second Episode

(Re-enter Sentries, leading Antigone, up the center isle from the back of the theater)

Choragus:

How now?

What wonder is this?

This woman captive is the Princess

Antigone herself

Why thus enchained?

Dear Antigone,

Have you been so brash and brazen

To cross the King's will

That in woeful folly brings you here
Against your will?

Second Sentry:

She is the culprit
We captured her in the act
Of burying her brother's body
Call for Creon!

Choragus:

He's coming now from his palace

(Enter Creon from Central Door)

Creon:

What passes here?
How do you return so soon?

First Sentry:

My King
One can be certain of nothing
I was certain not to return here again
So frightened was I of your wrath
And the outcomes of your threats

But who would have none
That so soon the guilty one would be caught.

There was not a draw of the unlucky straw
Happy am I now to return in haste
Bearing news that this woman here
Is your law-breaker
We discovered her burying the body

She's yours now to question and judge
I've done my part and am happy to be done with it

Creon:

This cannot be right
This is the Princess
Antigone
Why is she in chains?

Second Sentry:

I swear
It was she who was trying to bury the body

Creon:

Can this be true?

Second Sentry:

My eyes did not deceive me

What else can I say?

Creon:

Tell me the facts

Tell me quickly!

First Sentry:

After your admonishment,

We returned to brush the dust from the body

Its flesh grown soft and smelling strong

We sat upon a windward hill

To keep our watch

No one dozing

We poked each other awake

But nothing stirred until the sun's orb

Burned full above us

Suddenly

A cloud of dust rose from the earth

Covering the sky

And obscuring the trees of the plain
In the darkness of the stinging dust
We shut tight our eyes and clung to our spears
The whirlwind blew long until it passed
And when it was over
There she was, Antigone
Like a mother bird returning to her empty nest
This girl wept with the discovery of the bare corpse
She damned to heaven the hands that wasted her work
And she then carried more dust
And sprinkled wine thrice for her brother's thirsty ghost
At once we ran down the hill
And captured her who showed us no fear
Even when we charged her with her crime
Denying nothing, comforted I was to escape your wrath
and yet uneasy at bringing a friend to death's door.
But still, better someone else's skin than my own.

Creon:

Antigone

Is your hanging head a confession?

Antigone:

I confess and nothing deny.

Creon:

Take your leave, Sentry!

(Sentries salute and exit stage right)

Tell me now

My proclamation did you not hear?

Antigone:

Public it was,

How could I not hear it?

Creon:

And so you dared defy my law?

Antigone:

Dared I not?

The proclamation was not from the Gods

The final judges of death

Ruling the underworld

Make no such laws

Your edict was strong and clear

King Creon

But your power is its own weakness

When set against the unwritten laws of the Gods

Heaven's laws are always more powerful

And will always be

Forever

Even when all men have passed

I knew my fate

Even if you gave no such decree

Mortal are we

But if I am to die so be it

Can death be so uninviting

When evil so surrounds the living

My death is of no consequence

But had I left my brother

Lying unburied on that ground unfriendly

Then I should have suffered eternally

Now I suffer no longer

But my soul rejoices

Foolish your smile mocks me

But perhaps it is the fool who accuses me of folly

Choragus:

So like her headstrong father

So stubborn that reason won't prevail to bow her head!

Creon:

She's young

The hard heart is first to break

The strongest iron cracks in its rigidity

The pride of a slave?

Her insolence is doubled

Boasting of breaking the laws

Am I not a man?

Who here is the brave one

If this crime remains unpunished?

My sister's child

More than that, closer in blood
Both her and her sister will suffer death for this breach!

(To servants, who exit off stage left)

Go

Arrest Ismene

Accused she stands with the same
She will be hiding in her house over there.

Her thoughts have been traitorous
Keeping her crimes in the darkness

Arrest Ismene

An uncle's brain shudders in despair
But how much worse is this prideful
Wanton boasting of her brazen lawlessness!

Antigone:

Creon,

What more can I give you than my death?

Creon:

Nothing more.
Your life forfeit
Gives me all I need.

Antigone:

I beg you
Kill me now
You wear me out with your talk
As mine must wear on you as well
And yet our talk shouldn't seem so troublesome
Is there no one to praise and honor my deeds?
These elders here would praise me
Were not their tongues in fear of your wrath
Made to whisper in silence
How fortunate are Kings
To say and do whatever they please!

Creon:

Alone you are
In your opinion.

Antigone:

No,

They share my sentiments,
Only stopped by your commandments

Creon:

Perhaps,
But guilty you are when they are not.

Antigone:

There is no guilt in respecting the dead.

Creon:

Was not Eteocles also your brother?

Antigone:

Alas, so was he too.

Creon:

Then why would you so dishonor his memory.

Antigone:

The dead would claim no dishonor in my deed.

Creon:

He would too,
For you honor a traitor like a hero.

Antigone:

His own brother

Hero or traitor
Equal in blood.

Creon:

War he brought to his own country
When Eteocles defended his people.

Antigone:

It doesn't matter
In death's hour all are due a final honor

Creon:

But not equally for the wicked and the just

Antigone:

Ah, Creon!
Who can say before the Gods
Whom is wicked and who is good!

Creon:

An enemy is no less so dead than alive.

Antigone:

I join in love, not hate.

Creon:

Go, then

And join your brothers!

If you must find love, find it in the underworld!

Choragus:

Look!

Here is Ismene.

(Enter Ismene, under guard but not bound from stage left)

Her tears

Are those of a sister

Her head hangs in a gentle sorrow.

Creon:

You, Ismene

Another serpent in my peaceful home

Sucking our life-blood

I never dreamed it possible all this while

That these two sisters would conspire against my throne!

Ismene

Confess your guilt

Or do you deny the charge?

Answer me now!

Ismene:

I don't deny it,
If she lets me say so
I'm equally guilty.

Antigone:

No, Ismene
You cannot say so.
She would not help me then
And she will not help me now.

Ismene:

But I understand you now
And I join you here to share the punishment!

Antigone:

The dwellers and lords of the underworld
Know whose deed this was
Words alone are not enough.

Ismene:

Refuse me again,

Antigone

I want to share your fate,

I too am duty-bound to the dead.

Antigone:

My death will be no less by your dying too!

Ismene:

What will be left for me in this world,

When you are gone?

Antigone:

Ask Creon.

You respect his mind.

Ismene:

Mock me?

But why, Antigone?

Antigone:

It's empty joy,

Ismene

Ismene:

Is there nothing to be done?

Antigone:

Save yourself

Though I would not envy your salvation

Some shall sing you praises, but my death has honor as well.

Ismene:

But both of us are guilty of the same crime.

Antigone:

Enough, Ismene

You live yet, I'm bound to die.

Creon (to the Chorus):

Gentlemen

I implore you to watch these girls

One has just gone mad,

The other was always mad.

Ismene:

Oh Creon,

Grief makes mad the steadiest mind.

Creon:

Grief certainly turned your mind

When you choose to walk with guilt!

Ismene:

But how can I continue to live without Antigone?

Creon:

You're still living
She's already dead.

Ismene:

But she's the bride of your own son!

Creon:

There are other fields for him to furrow,
There will be no wicked wives for my sons!

Ismene:

Dearest Haimon,
How your father does you injustice!

Creon:

No more pattering about marriage.

Choragus:

Do you really mean to rob
Your son of this young girl?

Creon:

Not I,
But death will do my bidding.

Choragus:

Then,
Must she die?

Creon:

Your wisdom astounds me.

Enough!

Take them away and make sure they don't escape!

They are only mere women,
and even brave men wish to run from death!

(Exit Ismene and Antigone, with Guards, stage right)

Ode II

Strophe I

Chorus:

Lucky is he who escapes the wrath of the Gods

If heaven casts its **thunderbolts**↑

The house is shaken to its timbers

Its children forever walk with damnation↑
Like a giant wave from the dark northeast
When the sea boils up in darkness
And bursts upon the windswept shores↑

Antistrophe I

Chorus:

I've watched the storm clouds gather
A long time in coming together↓
Over the house of Oedipus
The plague returning with each generation↓
This last flower of proud Oedipus
So beautiful just rejoicing in the sunshine↓
Now dirty and wilted by a mere handful of dust↓

Strophe 2

Chorus:

What arrogant mortal
Stands above the storms of Olympus↑
The Gods there live young forever

All that is past, present and future is their **decree**

No earthly pride is free of heavenly **judgment**↑

Antistrophe 2

Chorus:

Wild dreams of men

Bring phantoms of **joy**↓

But drowsing too close to the fire

The heat of the fire reawakens **them**↓

Else they walk like blind men

But the wisdom of the **ancients**↓

Is good for all time

Fate works most for **woe**↓

With Folly's fairest show

The pleasures of men are the springs of unending **sorrow**↓

Third Episode

Choragus:

Haimon comes

O King
Your youngest son
Is it in grief over Antigone
Or bitterness of being robbed a bride?

(Enter Haimon, from stage right)

Creon:

Soon shall we see
Without divination

Son
You know my judgment on her
Do you come in hate for me
Or in obedience and deference
For my fair judgment?

Haimon:

Your son am I
My guide you are
You make my world clear
And I am obedient to your instruction

There can be no marriage
Without the benefit of your fatherly wisdom

Creon:

You are a good son
Obedient to your father's will
Such a son is a blessing to any man
Attentive and dutiful to his house
Hateful of his father's foes
Honoring his allies

But if it were otherwise
If sons turn out troublesome
Then a father has only trouble himself
And entertainment for the wicked

Right you are
Not to go mad over this girl
Any pleasure would soon be gone
My Haimon
With only a hellcat left over

So let her find her husband in Hades

Only she

Of everyone in the land

Has shown contempt for my laws

Should I be seen as weak before the others

By breaking my own oath?

No

Antigone must die

Whether she pleads for her family or not

If I permit my own family to rebel against me

How can I expect the rest of the world to obey?

Whoever governs

Must be obeyed in all things and in all ways

Large or small

Just or Unjust

O Haimon

Only the obedient man knows how to command

Trustworthy in battle

Of lawlessness

There is no greater curse on the world

Cities fall and great houses burn down

Armies scatter to the winds

Life is made good by discipline

So we keep the laws

Without a woman's seduction

Lose at least to a man

Not to a weak woman

Choragus:

Well said,

My King

With dignity and to the sharpest point!

Haimon:

Father

Right in reason

To caution me against my madness

Never should I say
You reasoned poorly
Yet others reason as well
Whose opinions may bear wisely
Upon this grave manner

Do you know everything
What others say or feel or do?
And your anger frightens them
To tell you only what you wish to hear

I can listen
And I've heard what they are saying
In the darkness about this girl
They whisper that there has been no more shameful a punishment
For such a generous and pious act.
Is it a crime to bury a brother?
To die, and not to be honored for her piety?
This is what they say in the city

Believe me

Your happiness is everything to me

Your fortune is your son's fortune

But I beg of you

Not to be so fixed

To believe you alone are right

Such a man who is always right

Turns out empty

It is not to oneself a treason

Never to yield to another's reason!

Trees bend in the flood or else are uprooted

At sea one's sail must not always be fast

Else down goes the ship

Don't be angry,

Let yourself be moved by compassion

Though I'm young,

Listen to my wise counsel

Men are not governed by instinct in nature

Since we are prone to make mistakes
Is it not reasonable to learn by others mistakes

Choragus:

Listen, O King
A sensible son is speaking to you
And listen too, O Haimon
Your father speaks sensibly too

Creon:

Is it sensible
That an aged father be schooled by a young son?

Haimon:

It is not,
If I'm wrong
But if I'm right
What does my youth matter?

Creon:

You think it sensible to defend lawlessness?

Haimon:

Certainly no criminal deserves my quarter.

Creon:

Is not this girl a criminal then?

Haimon:

The entire city does not think so.

Creon:

And the citizens propose to teach me to be King?

Haimon:

Now whose talking like a child?

Creon:

Mine is the only voice heard giving orders in this city.

Haimon:

It is no city that takes orders from a single voice.

Creon:

The King is the state!

Haimon:

Only if the state is a desert and not a city!

Creon:

Boy,

You've been felled by a woman!

Haimon:

Only if you are a woman

Your own sake is my only consideration
When your kingship yourself has forsaken

Creon:

What?

What consideration in publicly arguing with your father?

Haimon:

And what about a King arguing with justice?

Creon:

How can I argue with justice when all I do is just
And for the best of our state?

Haimon:

There is no justice in disobedience
To the time-honored edicts of the Gods

Creon:

Young fool!
Taken in by a woman!

Haimon:

But not taken by something vile!

Creon:

Vile is every word you utter on her behalf!

Haimon:

Every vile word I utter is for you.

Creon:

As long as she lives
Your wife she will never be

Haimon:

So she must die
And if she dies so must another!

Creon:

Another?
Are you mad too?
Are you threatening me?

Haimon:

One cannot threaten echoes
By speaking to emptiness

Creon:

Swear I
You will live to regret your arrogance
You are the empty one!

Haimon:

And if you were not my father,
I'd call you wicked.

Creon:

Foolish boy
Don't argue with me!

Haimon:

Sorry I am
That you prefer my silence.

Creon:

I swear by the Gods of Olympus
You'll bide your tongue,
This at least I promise both heaven and hell!

(to the servants)

Bring out the girl here
Bring her out so he can watch her die!
Bring her now!

Haimon:

Not here

Not now, King

And my face you will not see again.

Rave on so long as there is someone who'll listen!

(Exit Haimon, stage right)

Choragus:

Gone!

All gone!

Creon, dangerous is a young man's anger!

Creon:

Let him go

A boy trying to be a man

He shall not stop the girls' death!

Choragus:

Both girls?

Are both sentenced to die?

Creon:

No, of course,

I cannot kill one whose hands remain clean

Choragus:

And Antigone?

Creon:

She shall be taken

Deep into the wilderness

She will be locked forever away

In a vault of stone

Food shall be had to free the state of her death

So she can pray alone in darkness to her Gods of Hades

And closer to them,

Perhaps they may show her a way out from death

Or perhaps she may learn finally

The pitiful and vain folly

Of too much piety for the dead!

(Exit Creon through center gate)

Ode III

Strophe 1

Chorus:

Wild

Love

Wasting wealth↑

Burning wax all night

On the cheek of a smooth-faced girl↑

Sea farer

Forest trekker↑

Even the spirits don't escape you

Lying in a shepherd's hut↑

Mortal men tremble↑

Before your glory

Possessed by madness↑

Antistrophe 1

Love infects us

Bringing ruin↓

Between father and son

None conquered but by Love↓

A bride's look more powerful than a King's decree

Aphrodite's smile mocks mortal man↓

Fourth Episode

(Antigone led in under guard from stage right, enchained and barefoot)

Choragus:

Awestruck

Knowing what I know

I can't refrain from crying

Here this Antigone

Is passing alive

Into the chamber of the underworld

Strophe 1

Antigone:

Have compassion

And behold at the edge of a sleepless night

So long sun

Welcome darkness and death

Call me to Hades' river

No marriage nor music on that cold water's edge

Chorus:

Praiseworthy

And **honorable**↑

In a strange fashion

Is your pilgrimage to the **underworld**↑

Healthy, unharmed

Who else has suffered such an **end**?↑

Antistrophe 1

Antigone:

A girl from Phrygia

Child of Tantalus

Clinging to bare rock

Enchained

Like ivy on Mt. Siphelus

Exposed to all the vagaries

Of ill wind and rain

Her weeping body slowly eroding

Into a waterfall

Feel I my fate

In her endless plight

Chorus:

A Goddess was she

Mere mortals are we ↓

What more honorable thing

Than a mortal woman ↓

With such a heavenlike end

To an unheavenly life ↓

Strophe 2

Antigone:

Mock me

Such friends who cannot wait for me to leave

On my final journey

Thebans

Proud charioteers

Witness my pitiless plight

Judgment unjust
Only love
For one whose final way
Leads beneath the earth
Where tears cannot penetrate

Chorus:

Beyond courage
There is only the justice of cold stone ↑
Who can say what part played
By the father's guilt ↑

Antistrophe 2

Antigone:

Sin of horrible sins
Marriage of a mother and son
All descendants must pay the final price
Oedipus
Your guilt reaches out from the grave
To murder my joy and happiness
Stranger in my homeland

Stalked by my incestuous birth

Chorus:

Reverence is good

But strength rests in the laws↓

That prevail over heavenly virtue

You have chosen living death by your own hand↓

Epode

Antigone:

So be it

Such verse bittersweet

The sunlight strikes me without effect

Suffering on cold bare feet

Take me to my resting place

Where there is no love or loss

The only song the echoing emptiness

Creon (Interrupting):

If funeral rites postponed death

Then we would be singing our laments forever

(To the servants)

Take her away

Do your duty

Leave her alone in her chamber

To live or die by her own wiles

And the fates and furies of her beloved Gods

Let us now wash our hands

Of this dirty unthankful job!

Antigone:

My tomb

Bridal chamber of cold rock

Soon shall I join my own people

Where the queen of the underworld

Welcomes ghosts below

There will be my father, and my mother

And my dear Polynieces

Dearest indeed

My hand washed clean

And rinsed by holy wine
My only reward
Unholy death before my own time

Still
Nothing wrong have I done
Before the altar of our Gods
But if I've wronged the truth in death I shall soon learn
But if the judgment falls on Creon's crown
Then may his punishment be equal to my own

Choragus:

Passionate Soul!
Yet blown by the same winds
Unbending

Creon:

Her guards will regret their delaying!

Antigone:

I hear the voice of death calling me!

Creon:

You make no mistake in answering to my calls!

Antigone:

Thebans

My father's Gods

Princes and Kings of Thebes

See me now, finally

End of a Proud Line

Led away to a dark sleepless death

Remember always

I've not broken the laws of heaven

What I now bear I suffer at the hands of men.

(to the guards)

Let us go and wait no more.

(Exit Antigone, escorted to her chamber, down theater left)

Ode IV

Strophe 1

Chorus:

Locked away
Was beautiful young **Danae**↑
In a bronze world without sunlight
A tomb as still and small as the **grave**↑
Yet to this princess
Zeus came with golden **showers**↑
Pouring his love upon her
Child↑
No art in war nor luck in wealth
Or the strongest sea-going **vessels**↑
Can prevent your final **Destiny**↑

Antistrophe 1

Lycurgas
Son of **Dryas**↓
Imprisoned for his false pride
In a rocky **tomb**↓
By angry Dionysus

Sealed up in cold silent **stone**↓
His falseness stilled in the echoes broken
Finally biting his **tongue**↓
By those he contemptuously mocked
The nine muses whose revels he turned to **wrath**↓

Strophe 2

Elders still tell
An almost forgotten **tale**↑
Of the place where the sea
Is split by the dark **ledge**↑
And surf beats doubly upon the shores
A King's new **bride**↑
In hatred for her nemesis
The Queen Cleopatra **imprisoned**↑
Ripping out her son's eyes
With bloody **fingers**↑
The Goddess of War

Grinning at the sightless sight ↑

Antistrophe 2

Blinded

Lamentation ↓

Of blood and tears

Grandsons of the North **Wind** ↓

Mother cradled by the gales

In youth racing colts across the sunswept **hills** ↓

Now in marriage entombed deathless

In her final **fate** ↓

Fifth Episode

(Enter blind Teiresias from down theater center, a prophet divining the future by watching the flight and listening to the cry of birds. He is led by a young steward, a rope tied from waist to waist)

Teiresias:

See how the blind man walks

My Princes

Lockstep with a youth

Two heads led by one.

Creon:

What new visions have you for us

Blind Old Teiresias?

Teiresias:

Much to tell

If only you listen

Creon

Creon:

Haven't I always heard

Your soothsaying prophecies?

Teiresias:

Wisely so,

And thus wisely ruled!

Creon:

I owe you much

I must admit

But what say you now

That brings you here?

Teiresias:

Fate calls you Creon!

Creon:

Explain

What dreadful words are these?

Teiresias:

Listen

Sitting in my place of dark visions

Where the birds gather

All a clattering, a chatter

I heard a strange scream

Amidst their cacophonous singing

A wild fury

That sent them fighting

I made my burnt offerings

But the God of Fire

Failed to give light

Only the spluttering fat
Melting from the thigh
The entrails smoked
And the bone burst apart
But with no golden blaze!

Heaven's sign
My boy here saw it
And it is you
Creon
Who have caused this disaster
Our homes and altars polluted
By the scavenging of dogs and birds
Eating the son of Oedipus
We give offerings to the Gods
But they hear our prayers not
Their fires put out by our unburnt offerings
While their omen birds
Gorge themselves on rotten flesh.

Do not trifle
Mistakes often happen
The good knowing the error of their ways
But the bad have only
The pride of always being right

Yield to the dead
And fight not with a corpse
Where the honor in twice killing a man?
I speak for your own sake
Yield to your own sense of goodness!

Creon:

I've always been chosen by prophets my entire life.
Long have I been
The target for the blunt bolts of blind old thundering dolts
Who deal in other's misfortune
While trying to buy their own fortunes!

Nay
Teiresias,

If your carrion keeping birds, or the Eagles of Olympus
themselves,

Should carry his corpse piecemeal to Heaven

I would not bend or give in.

I have no fear of pollution that is not corrupt

Gods cannot be sullied by mortals.

Do your worst

Old soothsayer

Make money at your trade

Anywhere else but in this palace

By my permission to finally bury it.

Prophets profit unwisely

When their fires are for hire!

Teiresias:

Creon

Does one remain in the world...

Creon:

Out with it!

Teiresias:

Who knows that wisdom
Cannot be bought by money?

Creon:

As surely as bribes may buy a dirty secret

Teiresias:

Vile Creon
Ill spoken and ill deeds!

Creon:

Say what you will,
My place is not to argue with blind old prophets.

Teiresias:

You claim I sell my prophecies

Creon:

Foolish old prophets have never been blinded
By shiny visions of gold!

Teiresias:

And Kings have never denied dreams of bronze!

Creon:

Blind old fool,
Don't forget to whom you speak.

Teiresias:

I know to whom I speak,
Without this fool you would not have been King!

Creon:

Your talents have been sold!

Teiresias:

You dare me speak my will...

Creon:

Then out with it!

Teiresias:

But they are words too dear
To be bought by your gold!

Creon:

Probably, but say it anyway
Whatever you have to prophesy
Will not change my mind on the matter.

Teiresias:

So be it
For whatever it may be worth.
Not long is the time

For payment of your debt

Flesh for flesh

One child you thrust to living death

The other dead one you keep from after-life.

You owe the Gods of heaven and the underworld

One in the grave before her time

The other denied the grave past his due.

This is your crime

And the Furies and Hades

Are flying swiftly for you.

How much am I worth now,

Creon?

It is not long now

And your house will echo with lamentations

and flow with tears

And people will curse you

Wherever they hear your name

For leaving their sons to rot

Before the gates of Thebes

Here be this old dolts thunder bolts

All aimed at you!

(To the boy)

Come

My child,

Take me home

Let him spend his wealth on younger men

Maybe he will soon learn

To temper his tongue by a wiser head!

(Exit Teiresias down theater right)

Choragus:

He leaves,

King,

But his words remain

A plague upon my mind

Old am I, but never do I remember

When he played us falsely.

Creon:

Too true

The toil his trouble words bring me

Hard it is to yield

but harder still to lose all for hardheaded pride!

Choragus:

Then King

Hear my wisdom!

Creon:

What should I do now?

Choragus:

Go free Antigone

As quickly as you can fly

And build a tomb for Polyneices

Within your own city.

Creon:

You tell me this?

Choragus:

Of course

Creon!

At once, as the wrath of the Gods
Moves even quicker yet
To still the pride of stubborn fools

Creon:

My heart tells me otherwise,
But quickly will I work
To forestall Destiny!

Choragus:

By your own hands,
And not by the bidding of others!

Creon:

I go
Before it is too late
Follow me to the tomb
I imprisoned her, now I must set her free!

Quickly, Now
Mighty are the Laws of Heaven
Misgivings have I

Not to serve them till the day I die!

Paeon

Strophe 1

Choragus:

God of Wine

By many names known

Chorus:

Iacchos

Son of Zeus and **Semele** ↑

Guardian of the West

King of the Plain of **Eleusis** ↑

Prince of Thebes

And the field of **dragons** ↑

By the stream of **Ismenos** ↑

Antistrophe 1

Choragus:

God of Wine

By many names known

Chorus

Torches

Light our hillsides ↓

Iacchos Nymphs

Dance at Castalia's Spring ↓

From the mountain vineyards

Come crowned in ivy ↓

Singing the streets of Thebes ↓

Strophe 2

Choragus:

By many names known

God of Wine

Chorus

Theban Iacchos

Child of Olympus ↑

Born of the Bride of the Thunder God

The shadow of plague ↑

Has befallen us

Come back to us↑
From Parnassus
On magnanimous feet↑
Down the mountainside
Across the crying straits↑

Antistrophe 2

Choragus:

Fire Io
Dancer of the starlight
Singer in the crystal night!
Blaze like a comet

Chorus

Come Iacchos
Leading your dancing midnight maenads↓
Crying Io Iacchus
God of Wine! ↓

Exodus

(Enter Messenger, running, up theater left)

Messenger:

Men of the house of Kadmos

Founder of Thebes

I cannot say of any condition

Thus it is, as it will always be,

Not Clearly good, nor clearly bad.

Fate lifts and then lets fall

Happy and sad alike

No one can foresee their own destiny

Consider Creon

Happy, if in the world it can be counted

Terrible in war

Solitary in his Counsel

Father of many high born children

Now, all vanished away!

Does a man live without the joy of life?

Walking about the day like a ghost stalking the night.
Rich he may yet be, remaining King of his House and Land
But without the pleasure of his Kingship or Kinship
I would not trade the embers of my fire
for all his realm embalmed.

Choragus:

Your words foretell sad sorrow
What news do they bear us?

Messenger:

Dead are the innocent
The guilty living have killed.

Choragus:

Explain yourself to me now your weird note,
Who is the guilty and who is the dead?

Messenger:

Haimon
The dead that in innocence lies
And then Haimon himself,
The guilty hand that has killed

Choragus:

By his father's hand, or his own?

Messenger:

Driven to despair by his father's murder

In madness he murdered himself

Choragus:

O Terrible Teiresias

How terribly true you tell your dark visions

Messenger:

This the news I bear

Take all that you can from my strange missive

For woefully deep is my care

Choragus:

Lo! Behold!

Eurydice the Queen

Does she hear?

(Enter Eurydice from stage left)

Eurydice:

Heard I strange voices, sirs,

Whilst opening the gate of Athena's shrine
Requesting her assistance this day
Hearing a voice bearing some new misfortune
And fainting
By the temple among my maids
Speak again
Whatever it may be:
I am no stranger to sorrow

Messenger:

Dear Queen
Plainly speak I what I've seen today
Without a cloak to shield your ears
If the only comfort is to lie!

With King Creon went I
To the plain of Polyneices
His body ravaged by dogs
Without prayer or lamentation
We made quick prayers to Hecate
Goddess of the underworld

And then Pluto himself
Begging his mercy
Bathing the body
In holy wine
Burning the remains
With fresh pine boughs
And upon the urn
We heaved up a towering barrow
From the soil of his own land

When we finished
Raced we to where Antigone
Lay entombed in living stone
One servant ran ahead
And far off heard a voice
Crying and calling from inside,
And he returned to tell the King
And Creon came closer
The air was heavy with wailing
Words lost upon our ears,

He bade us to make haste,
Saying "Am I a prophet" and weeping,
"And must I alone walk this road,
The hardest road I've ever had to tread?"
I hear my son's voice calling me on
Come quickly
Peer you two through that crack
Is it Haimon there,
Or some wanton apparition of the Gods?

Obeying our King,
We crept into the crevice
And spying there, in the distant corner
We saw her body
Antigone
Had hanged herself
By a noose of her own fine hair
Haimon lay beside her
Arms about her waist
Lamenting her

His love lost
To the underworld
Cry out did he
That his father took her away from him
And when Creon saw him thus
Tears came to his eyes
And he called him back
"My child, what is this?
Speak to me, my son.

What makes your eyes roll so brightly in the darkness?

My son, o my beloved son.
I beg to you on my knees,
Come back to me!

But Haimon spat at his father
Silently staring
His sword slowly drawing
And lunged at his father
Creon shrank away, missing the sharp edge

And Haimon, in lonely desperation,
Drove it into his own side, falling
And dying, calling out to Antigone
And gathering her back into his failing arms
Choking, his red blood staining her white cheek.

And now my sad story is told
Haimon lies dead with his dead love
She is yet his bride in the underworld.

(Exit Eurydice into the Palace, stage center)

Choragus:

She leaves us dumbstruck,
What can this utter silence mean?

Messenger:

My troubles multiply
Yet her motives I cannot guess
So great is her grief for public eyes
Doubtless the privacy of her chamber she seeks
For her dead so to weep.

Choragus:

It must be so, but this silence is too terrible to bear.

Messenger:

I will follow her inside to see what she is up to.

**(Exit Messenger center stage. enter Creon with attendants,
carrying the body of his son, Haimon, up theater left)**

Choragus:

The King returns
Bearing in his arms
His greatest burden

Creon:

Speak not!
My darkness abides me
A murdering father with a murdered son
By the hand of all my royal wisdom!

Haimon
My young son
Too young to die

I played the fool and you paid the piper.

Choragus:

Truth be told

Though too late in the telling

Creon:

This sad truth

Is too heavy a burden to bear

Surely the Gods

Have cast down their lots

Upon my puny existence

And driven into savagery

Trampling to death what is most dear.

How difficult is the road that we make for ourselves

(Enter Messenger from inside the Palace)

Messenger:

Heavy might be the burden you now bear

But heavier still is the burden upon your house.

Creon:

What heavier burden under heaven
Than what I know carry in my own arms?

Messenger:

Dead be the Queen.

Creon:

O the gateway of death
Is there no end to my pain?
Bearer of evil tidings
You kill me twice in one day
Boy, speak true.
Is she really gone?
Has death begotten more death?

Messenger:

Look for yourself
**(the doors are opened and Eurydice is lying on the floor
within)**

Creon:

O Shame
Too true, so true
That I cannot bear it longer

And remain a father
To a dead wife and a dead son!

Messenger:

Before the altar,
The knife in her hand
Plunged into her own heart
And she cried out greatly
For her other son Megareus
Self-sacrificed to the Gods during our siege
And for her youngest Haimon, also dead
And then she cursed their father
Murder of her children
And falling then
Darkness closed her eyes.

Creon:

My Gods,
I fear myself to death.
Is there not a sword someone can give me
Or a blow to my breath?

Messenger:

You yet stand cursed
For the murder of her sons.

Creon:

And so cursed should I be.
I stand yet along in guilt.
Take me to her, take me too her.

Choragus:

You are finally right
In all your unending wrong
Quick is the dead in a world of endless sorrow.

Creon:

Then quickly let it come to me
And kindly shall it be welcome
Before the sun rises up again upon our walls.

Choragus:

What happens will happen
In the meantime
There remains much still to be done.
Let Fate now to its own ends

Creon:

Extinguished by prayer
Put out my last prideful desire
By that most ritual fire

Choragus:

Pray no more, then,
The Heavens are silent.

Creon:

Lead me away from here.
I have murdered my own wife and sons
In my own prideful folly
Comfort I seek now in their death
All I have touched has died,
and that is the fate of my foolish pride.

**(Creon is lead into the palace, the gates closing behind him.
Choragus advances to address the audience)**

Choragus:

And so ends our ancient tale
Told of even older tradition.
There is no wealth without wisdom

And wisdom always rests with the pious
Loud words never go boldly unheeded
And old age teaches wisdom young men needed
And reverence under the heavens!

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