

ANTIGONE

by

Sophocles

Adapted by David Feldshuh



Author's Note:

Antigone is above all a story told to an audience. My primary goal in this adaptation was to tell that story with clarity, immediacy and theatricality avoiding stilted literalism without losing Sophocles' haunting images and pointed argument.

I began by studying twelve translations/adaptations. It quickly became clear that all translations (intended or not) are adaptations. There are considerable uncertainties in the original Greek text (Who really said that line? What was the original meaning of that word?) and a translator/adaptor is forced to make choices and assume a certain degree of freedom based on what he or she believes is important.

Of most importance to me was a text that could be acted forcefully and naturally. I remember being influenced by the rhythm and richness of Biblical language. In Ezekial, for example: "What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions; she nourished her cubs among young lions". These lines have internal rhythm. They have repetition that gives them structure. They are poetic but simply spoken.

As a director planning a production that would use masks and music, I was searching for a text that would have the discipline of poetry and the internal rhythm and elevation of song while at the same time sound spontaneous and credibly personal. Shakespeare's rhythm, iambic pentameter, became the obvious choice. Iambic pentameter gave the dialogue a dynamic tempo that allowed it to be underscored throughout the ninety minutes that it took to present the play. The objectives were clear and could be played through the text. The text was, above all, easy and fun to act.

There are six choruses in *Antigone*. This adaptation tries to create a unique tone and specific dramatic function for each of them:

Chorus One is a war story filled with images of violence (“blood spears for teeth”) and shouts of victory (“Thebes filled with joy”).

Chorus Two is a celebration of man’s ingenuity (“Nothing can stop Man”) restrained by a warning to those who would betray the gods (“No friends will Man find”).

Chorus Three is a dark and rhythmical prophesy (“wave upon wave of affliction”)

Chorus Four, Eros, is deeply sensual and dreamlike (“Caught in the net of desire”).

Chorus Five tells stories of suffering that demand endurance (“suffer, accept, endure”).

Chorus Six is a revel ending in a frenzied, passionate call to Dionysis.

There are other chanted or sung moments in the script. All of them are in bold and centered.

I have also made an important structural change in the final messenger scene. The messenger becomes a narrator for the audience and each character (including those already dead) describes their part of the story in the third person. The Messenger says, for example, “As Creon drew near to that unholy place”. Creon continues the story: “He heard a mournful voice, from deep within the cave”. This change allowed all the characters to be brought back onto the stage and into the action prior to the ending of the play.

Our production at Cornell University featured four resident professional actors working side by side with our undergraduate students and served as part of Cornell’s Freshman Reading Project for which 3,500 students read *Antigone*. A broadcast DVD of that production as well as a DVD documentary of the process of creating it are currently available through Cornell’s Educational Television Center, dab1@cornell.edu.

For all those who have found this script in cyberspace: please feel free to use this text either in the classroom or on the stage. I would only request that you email me (dmf6@cornell.edu) so that I might know that this adaptation has found a further life beyond what was a remarkable experience for all of us here at Cornell University.

David Feldshuh

Professor and Artistic Director,
Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts
Cornell University, 2004



PROLOGUE

Antigone, Ismene

ANTIGONE

Ismene. My sister, Ismene. My own. My flesh.
The curse of Oedipus our father hangs like a yoke
Of torment 'round our necks. Today that curse
Belongs to us: Unhappiness, calamity, disgrace and shame.
Now with the morning sun a new day's pain:
Brave Creon's proclamation. What rumors have you heard?

ISMENE

*(Note: all dialogue that is centered or bold is meant to be chanted
or sung)*

*Yesterday was ripe with death.
Our brothers fought now both lie dead.*

The dark of night was filled with shouts-

ANTIGONE

Of war-

ISMENE

*The rebels fled to Argos.
Today is fresh, no news-*

ANTIGONE

Yes, some,

ISMENE

The shadows of your face are cracked-

ANTIGONE

With pain,

ISMENE

Then tell me what I must now hear.

ANTIGONE

I will. In secret.

We had two brothers, both equal in our love.
But now by proclamation Creon honors
One and shames the other. Eteocles is buried
With solemn rite and ceremony. But
Polyneices by royal decree is left unwept,
Unmourned, unburied and condemned to feed
The birds of prey that swoop and feast upon
His naked body.

And to this place, brave Creon comes today
To threaten us with public execution.
Death by stoning if we disobey
A single word of his decree. Ismene,
My sister, my flesh, the blood of Polyneices
Runs in both our veins. Are you worthy of your birth?

ISMENE

What would you have me do?

ANTIGONE

What you must do. Join with me in burying our brother.

ISMENE

Will you defy the law?

ANTIGONE

Would you betray our brother?

ISMENE

It is forbidden by Creon's proclamation.

ANTIGONE

No edict can be stronger than our blood.

ISMENE

*Think,
See,
Remember our father.*

*Remember him dying hated and scorned.
Driven by guilt to tear out his eyes.*

*Think,
See,
Remember our mother.*

*Remember her sin: mother-wife, wife-mother.
She knotted a rope and snuffed out her life.*

*Think,
See,
Remember our brothers.*

*Remember two brothers on one day destroyed.
Spilling their blood and sharing their fate.*

*Think,
See....*

Antigone, we alone still live.
If we break the law and die for it,
Our shame will last forever.
Women are not made to battle men.
The rulers now are stronger than the ruled.
We must obey. Then seek forgiveness

ANTIGONE by Sophocles

From the dead. What use are senseless gestures
Of revolt?

ANTIGONE

No more. Be still.
The moment's passed when you could join with me.
You've made your choice but I will bury him,
And I will welcome death in doing it.
To rest beside my brother's corpse his love
Embracing mine, I will commit a crime
Against the laws of men but you defy
The gods. To please the living is a passing thing.
In death we dwell forever.

ISMENE

I must obey the law. It is too strong.

ANTIGONE

A weak excuse.
My hands can lift the earth above my brother's body.

ISMENE

I am afraid.

ANTIGONE

I know.

ISMENE

For you.

ANTIGONE

Look to your own destiny. I will suffer mine.

ISMENE

I'll tell no one of your plan. I promise you.

ANTIGONE

Then I will hate you more than I do now.
Go tell the world, shout it in the streets.

ISMENE

Passion is not power. You will fail.

ANTIGONE

And when I fail, I fail. But not before.

ISMENE

Why start a journey to a hopeless place?

ANTIGONE

One word more and you will earn my hate.
Two words and the newly-dead will haunt you
Day and night. Now go away.
If I am mad, then leave me to my madness.
There are worse fates for me than dying brave.

ISMENE

If you love beyond reason, your life I can't save.

CHORUS #1: WAR AND VICTORY

CHORUS

*Golden chariot, radiant sun
Eye of the golden day
Glory to the dawn's first light
That burned the terror of the night
That drove the Argos army's might
From the seven gates of Thebes.*

CHORUS LEADER

In the night the army of Polyneices like an eagle
Thirsting for our blood circled the gates of Thebes.

CHORUS
Swooping
Soaring
Diving
Plunging
Mouth open wide
Blood spears for teeth
Circling
The seven gates of Thebes.

CHORUS LEADER
Polyneices' army scaled the walls and climbed upon our towers
Shouting "Triumph" "Conquest"
Boasts that angered Zeus.
Zeus drowned their shouts in thunder.
Zeus severed their pride with a lightning bolt.

CHORUS
Down, down the mighty army fell
A burning eagle
Circling, falling,
Twisting
Trailing fire, flame and pitch
Screaming vengeance
In voices thick with blood.
Splintered bodies
In the dust.
In the dust.
Stillness.

CHORUS LEADER
Vengeance from Zeus. The great war god.
At six Theban gates, battles fought and won.
But at the seventh gate no victory:
Two brothers fought
Tasted each others blood

And shared a feast of death between them.

CHORUS

*Victory, victory,
Thebes filled with joy,
Dance through the night.
Bacchus, Bacchus,
God of the dance.
War is dead.
War is dead.
Thebes filled with joy.
Victory, victory.
Dance through the night.*

EPISODE #1

Creon, Chorus Leader, Guard

CHORUS LEADER

Here you see before you Creon, our new-born king.
What is he planning? Why has he brought us here?

CREON

My Friends. Countrymen. Citizens. Men of Thebes.
Our ship of state though pounded hard by waves
Of war, has found safe harbor. Thanks to the gods.

Today from all the citizens of Thebes,
I have summoned you. I know you well.
You have lived long and loyal:
Loyal to old King Laius in his time.
Loyal to Oedipus his son throughout his reign.
And when he died you each pledged unflinching

ANTIGONE by Sophocles

Loyalty to Polyneices and Eteokles, his ill-fated sons.

Now those sons of Oedipus are dead.
Yesterday in an a single hour, pierced
By a double shaft of fate, brother murdered brother.

Now it is my turn. As I am next in blood,
I must take up the crown and with it
All the power of the state.

You think you know me well. But no man can be
Known until the moment that he has tasted power.
Power tests a man. So before you all I swear:
Never will I favor friendship above
The welfare of the state. Never will I
Fear the righteous act. Never will I
Fail to listen to your honest wisdom.
Our welfare is the welfare of the state.

Let us now begin. I here proclaim:
Eteokles, you died most nobly fighting for our city.
You shall be buried gloriously with every rite and honor.
As for Polyneices, your so called brother,
From exile he returned to ravage his native land,
To burn our temples, to drink the blood of those
Of us he could not first enslave.
For him this is my edict: None will honor him.
None will mourn his death. He will lie unburied,
Until his flesh is torn by angry birds
And furious dogs crack his bones to dust.
This is the law.

CHORUS

***The law is made by you.
You are now the law.
For the living and the dead.***

CREON

Remember that.
And do not side with those who would oppose me.
Money may corrupt a man and lead him
To destruction.

CHORUS

We may be old but we do not dream of death.

CREON

Death is the price you'd pay. Remember that.

(GUARD ENTERS)

GUARD

My lord,
I stand now breathless but not from running here.
My journey was a long, slow road with many
Fits and starts and sitdowns. Many times
I turned around. My feet refused to move.
But though my feet wouldn't move my mind raced on
And spoke to me in double voice both screams:
"Slow down, you fool, you're racing to your death."
But when I turned the other voice attacked me.
"If Creon hears your news from someone else
You'll end up just as dead." Fate has chosen to
Encircle me with death. I have no choice.
That is my only comfort. So here I stand.

CREON

Your terror does not interest me. I want to hear your news.

GUARD

And I will tell it. Soon. But first in my defense:
I did not do it. I did not see it done.
So I am blameless.

ANTIGONE by Sophocles

CREON

Then why are you afraid?
How bad can your news be?

GUARD

The worst news I could tell.

CREON

Then say it fast.
Your presence tires me.

GUARD

The body's buried.
Not buried but sprinkled with fine dust as if
All rites and proper ceremonies had been performed
On it.

CREON

Who would dare to do it? Tell me, now.

GUARD

I have no answer for you. There were no tracks,
No signs, no trace of beast or man. The earth
Around the body was unbroken, hard
And smooth. There was nothing but the body and the shroud of
sacred
Dust protecting it from the sun's first light.
We searched and searched but found no clues
And then we searched each other. Each man on guard
Was questioned hard and long. Suspicion made
Each guilty but no one man more guilty than
The rest. "Test me with fire. Let me hold hot iron
In my hand. The gods we swear by know
I did not do it", each man said in turn.
Then in the silence one man stood to speak:

“We must go to Creon with this news”.
We gambled and I lost so here I am.
A messenger doomed by the news he brings.

CHORUS

Lord Creon, think: is this the hand of god?

CREON

Not one word more from you. Are you so old
That time has petrified your brains? Why should
The gods be mindful of a corpse whose living
Body led an army here to devastate
Their temples, break their laws and steal their treasures?
Do you believe the gods exalt the evil
Deeds of men? No. Not now. Not ever.
I see rebellion in this act. Disobedience,
Sedition and revolt. Defiance of the law, resistance
To my just government and power. And what's the reason?
Money, money is the root of this transgression.
Who bribed you? Tell me now? For here and now
I swear to great god Zeus, now listen you,
Listen to this oath: you will find the man who did this crime
Or I will hang you, slowly; so that you swing
And gasp and choke by inches 'til you confess
The truth or learn by dying the cost of your deceit.

GUARD

May I speak, a word? Before I go?

CREON

Your voice offends me.

GUARD

My voice may grate upon your ears.
It is the deed that cuts into your soul.

ANTIGONE by Sophocles

CREON

My pain is not for you to know.
You are a fool.

GUARD

Then you accuse a fool of wondrous treachery.

CREON

Fools sell their lives for money.

GUARD

And great men know suspicion is not truth.

CREON

The truth is this: you will bring me
The man who did this crime. Or you will learn
There is no money equal to hard pain. *(CREON EXITS)*

GUARD

I'm still alive, I think. The gods have spared me.
I'll run from here far past the city's gate.
I pray the traitor's caught but that I leave to fate.

CHORUS #2: WONDER IS MAN

VERSE 1

Wonder, wonder is Man.

*Wonder the path Man cuts through the seas:
Through angry gray waves, violent and howling, roaring and
raging,*

Through towering waves capped white with foam.

VERSE 2

Wonder, wonder is Man.

*Wonder the fruit Man brings from the earth:
From harvest to harvest with mule-team and plough,
season to season,
Milking abundance from great goddess earth.*

VERSE 3

Wonder, wonder is Man.

*Wonder the birds Man snares in his net:
The horse he has yoked, with hard rein and bit. Man
tames the hill lion,
Man tames mountain bulls. Man's cunning is fierce.*

VERSE 4

Wonder, wonder is Man.

*Wonder Man's speech, Man's thought and quick mind,
Man's passion for reason. The cities he's built. Nothing
can stop Man.
Disease Man has vanquished. Death alone, conquers all.*

VERSE 5

Wonder, wonder is Man.

*Wonder Man's power, for evil or good,
Man honors the gods. Seeks justice in law. Man's cities will
prosper.
Wonder Man's power, for evil or good.
Betray the gods' law, abuse sacred power,
No friends will Man find, no place will he have, he'll
wander an exile,
Far from his city, far from warm fire, far from my spirit,
far from my home.*

EPISODE #2

Antigone, Guard, Creon, Ismene, Chorus Leader

(ANTIGONE ENTERS WITH GUARD)

CHORUS LEADER

Oh, gods,
I pray my eyes tell falsehoods to my soul.
Or else the curse of Oedipus, the father, lives on
In you. In you, Antigone. Tell us,
Did you break the law of our new king?

GUARD

She did.

CHORUS LEADER

Has your obsession lead you now to madness?

GUARD

It has. Where is the King?

CHORUS LEADER

Here comes the answer to your question.

CREON

You, again? Is this the last time you will speak?

GUARD

My King, I kneel before you unfaithful to
My oath. I swore I never would return
To face again the power of your rage.
But here I am. I've proved myself a liar.
And this I've learned: Joy sought is good;
But unexpected joy on the back of deep

Despair, that joy feels so much better.
Here I stand and with me here this girl.
I stand before you witness to her crime.
I saw her burying Polyneices' body.
As did we all. But this time the luck was mine.
All mine. My luck to bring her to you. Extract
The truth from her. But give me pardon from
All punishment.

CREON

First tell me what you saw?

GUARD

I saw her burying the body. There was
Nothing else to see.

CREON

Not possible.

GUARD

I saw it.

CREON

There must be some mistake. She would not do it.

GUARD

I saw her burying the body.

CREON

What body?

GUARD

The corpse. The one you ordered left unburied.
That one.

CREON

No.

GUARD

Yes.

CREON

Tell me everything you saw. All of it.

GUARD

I'll tell you all I know: I left here with terror
Beating in my brain. But as my duty
Bid me, I returned to see the body. One by one
Each sentry picked away the grains of sand
And bits of dirt, stripping the shroud of dust from
The broken, naked corpse. And then we rested
On a nearby hill. The corpse downwind.
So that we would not taste the smell of it.
Every man remained on guard and vigilant.
We cursed each other to keep strong our watch.
And time moved on. The sun burned overhead
Blazing heat upon us all. Then suddenly
A vortex from the sky twisted to
The earth raising a storm of dust that blinded
Us to earth and sky and stripped the shaking
Branches of their leaves. This chaos ended
Suddenly, as fast as it began. And as
It cleared we heard a plaintive moan, as if
A wounded bird returning to its nest
Had found it shredded, empty of her young.
We saw a figure standing by the body
Howl in agony and lamentation,
We heard her curse those who had defiled the corpse.
And then with handfuls of dry dust, we saw
Her dress the body and from an urn of bronze
Pour water once, then twice, and then again,
A funeral libation to the dead.
In a moment we surrounded her. Unafraid

She turned to us and when we challenged her,
She did not deny her crime. She boasted of it.
That moment filled me with sweetness and with pain.
I take no pleasure in the trouble of a child
I once had called a friend. But I cannot
Forget the danger I am in. I must
Seek safety for my own life.

CREON

Don't look away.
Look straight into my face. Now answer this
Man's charge.

ANTIGONE

All that he has said, I here confess.
There is nothing he has said that I deny.

CREON

I acquit you of the charge of treason. You
Are free to go. (*Guard leaves*)
Antigone, did you hear my proclamation?
Did you hear my edict that made your act
A crime?

ANTIGONE

I heard you words, your edict, and your proclamation.

CREON

And then you chose to violate the law.

ANTIGONE

Your law. Not the sacred law. The gods
That rule among the dead have issued no
Such proclamation. A man cannot erase
The laws unwritten. Cannot change the unchanging

ANTIGONE by **Sophocles**

Laws of heaven. Eternity is beyond
The bounds of time, beyond today or yesterday,
Beyond forever. Gods' laws were there before
The birth of man. Should I fear you more
Than I should fear the gods? I know that I
Shall die. I was destined to that end before
Your proclamation. To leave a world so filled
With evil, the sooner death embraces me
The more I have to gain. I welcome death.
Without a tear or sorrow. But to leave the body
Of my mother's son unmourned, torn
And rotting in the sun, that would cause
True pain. You call me fool. You. Fool.
Fool to call me fool.

CHORUS LEADER

She is defiant like her father Oedipus.
In the face of danger, she has not learned submission.

CREON

She will learn. Today. Iron burned
Most fiercely in the furnace is the first
To crack. The wildest horse is broken by
The smallest bit. Those without power should not flaunt
Their pride. Pride in breaking our just laws.
Pride to boast of your offense and laugh
At us. If I excuse your crime without
Just punishment, you would be king not I.
I am no man, she is the man, if
I do not demand just punishment.
You are my sister's child as close to me
By blood as any living. But you will die.
You will not escape nor will your sister.
I accuse you both and judge you both: guilty.
Guilty. Bring Ismene to me. I saw her in the palace
Screaming, raving, driven mad by her

Own guilt. The guilty cannot hide their guilt.
It is imprinted on the face. Your face convicts you.
I hate your crime but more than that I hate
The glory that you take in it.

ANTIGONE

You want me dead?

CREON

I do. That is all I want.

ANTIGONE

Then kill me now. Why wait? Your words displease me,
I thank the gods for that, but there's nothing
I can do. My words displease you,
So you will take my life. But as I live
I will speak words of glory and of honor
When I say to my brother: I have buried you.
Speak all you men. Make him hear the truth.
Fear and terror locks their mouths in silence.
You've quickly learned the luxury of power.
There's nothing that a tyrant cannot do.

CREON

In all of Thebes, none but you would call
Me tyrant.

ANTIGONE

Many share my thoughts but dare not speak.

CREON

And all of Thebes is wrong but you are right?
Have you no shame?

ANTIGONE

What shame is there to honor a dead brother?

ANTIGONE by Sophocles

CREON

Your brother killed your brother. Think on that.

ANTIGONE

One mother and one father gave life to both of them.

CREON

When you grace a traitor's grave, you bring
Disgrace on him who died for Thebes, a hero.

ANTIGONE

In death, my brother would forgive.

CREON

Forgive a traitor who took his life?

ANTIGONE

He was his brother.

CREON

A brother who betrayed a brother and his city.

ANTIGONE

Death makes us all the same. Death demands we honor both.

CREON

The good we honor. The wicked we condemn.

ANTIGONE

In death the two will meet in sacred love.

CREON

Death will not make an enemy a friend.

ANTIGONE

I love them both and will not bend to hate.

CREON

Then join them there and love them both in hell.
No woman rules this kingdom while I live.

(ENTER ISMENE)

CHORUS LEADER

You see before you now, her sister, Ismene.
Grief has stained the shadows of her face.
Her tears are for her sister.

CREON

You, a serpent in my house, you bleed
Me of my strength and with your sister
Conspire to destroy my throne and power.
Now is the time: confess your part in burying
The body or swear your innocence.

ISMENE

(to Antigone) If you will share your guilt with me, I will here
Confess. "I was accomplice and partner in the crime".

ANTIGONE

No. Justice must be pure. *(to Creon)* I begged but she
Refused to help. I did the work alone.

ISMENE

But I am proud to stand beside you now.
Let me share your danger and your pain.

ANTIGONE

No. The god of death and those who dwell
Below know well I did the work alone.
I asked for deeds, you gave me empty words.

ANTIGONE by Sophocles

ISMENE

Sister, let me die with you. Together
We will bring honor to the dead.

ANTIGONE

No. My death alone will be enough.

ISMENE

And when you're gone, what life is left to me?

ANTIGONE

I leave you Creon to protect and feed.

ISMENE

Do you find strength in taunting me?

ANTIGONE

No, I feel only pain.

ISMENE

Then let me help you? Tell me how to help.

ANTIGONE

Stay alive. Save yourself. Live your life.
I do not envy it.

ISMENE

I want to share your fate.

ANTIGONE

You cannot do it.
You have chosen life; I choose to die.

ISMENE

I failed you in my warning.

ANTIGONE

The living thought you wise. I listen to the dead.

ISMENE

I will share your guilt.

ANTIGONE

It is my fate to serve the dead.
My soul died long ago.

CREON

You are sick with madness.
The both of you. You by choice. You since birth.

ISMENE

Cruelty will drive the sane, insane.
She is my sister. I cannot live and see her die.

CREON

She is dead already. You are still alive.

ISMENE

She is betrothed to marry your own son.

CREON

My son will find another field to plough.

ISMENE

The two of them are deeply bound in love.

CREON

A worthless wife for my good son.

ISMENE

Sweet Haemon, your father usurps your marriage rites.

CREON

Enough. No more from you. I have grown weary
Of your marriage talk.

CHORUS LEADER

Will you take this bride from your only son?

CREON

Death will take her. A union made forever.

CHORUS LEADER

You have decided then? She must die?

CREON

You have pronounced the sentence. I cannot but agree.
Let's not waste time. Confine them to their rooms. I've known
Brave men to run from death. These women must not stray.
Imprison them inside. I want them dead. Today.

CHORUS 3: FATE

I.

*Blessed are those free of trouble.
Blessed are those free from ruin.
They are few. They are few.
Damned are the many marked by the gods,
To live lives rich in pain.
Shake the house, shake the house,
Of Oedipus.
From the churning chasms of a dark, dark sea
Wave upon wave, smashes the shore,
An endless wave of trouble.*

Mother to daughter, father to son,

*Wave upon wave of affliction.
Shake the house, shake the house
Of Oedipus.*

II.

*Sorrow upon sorrow from times before time
Grief descending on grief.
The gods have chosen. There is no escape.
Then a splinter of light on a fresh, spring root
The last spring root of the house of Oedipus.
Then frenzy and folly and fury and passion,
The slice a cutting knife,
The last green root bleeds red.*

*Mother to daughter, father to son
Wave upon wave of affliction.
Shake the house, shake the house
Of Oedipus.*

III.

*Power is Zeus, Zeus is power,
Nothing is stronger not sleep nor time.
In the dazzling sky of high Olympus
This is the law: greatness in man brings ruin.
The gods tempt you to walk down the path,
The path of hope, the path of hot fire,
Then evil seems good, the gods are watching,
There is no escape, the air we breathe is ruin.*

*Mother to daughter, father to son
Wave upon wave of affliction.
Shake the house, shake the house
Of Oedipus.*

EPISODE # 3

Creon, Haemon, Chorus Leader, Chorus

CHORUS LEADER

Look:

Here is Haemon. The last of Creon's sons.
He grieves for the loss of his bride, Antigone.

CREON

Do not speak of what you do not know.
You are not oracles. If it is so
Let Haemon tell me so himself. My son,
Do you come here hating me for the decree I have
Pronounced on your intended bride?
Or am I still your father?

HAEMON

Always still
My father. And I am still your son. I am guided
By the wisdom of your judgment. No marriage can
Outweigh the worth of your good government.

CREON

My son. My most precious son.
The child who disobeys his father's judgment
Is worthless, bringing to his father scorn
And endless trouble. You have learned obedience to your father's
will.
To honor my loyal friends. To avenge my enemies.
A father with a son like you is blessed.

My son, lust is not love.
Do not confuse the two. The arms of this traitor
In your bed will in time turn your passion cold.
She is your enemy. An enemy is poison.

Spit her out. She's searching for a husband?
Let her find one down in hell.

She chose to disobey the law. She
Alone. Should I now betray that law?
Should the people call me now a liar?
I have caught her. She must now die.

Let her sing her prayers to Zeus and talk
Of ancient laws, unwritten. She breeds rebellion.
Rebellion in my house, will breed rebellion
Everywhere. To rule the city justly,
I must rule my family with firm justice.
I am the lawful ruler of this city.
My laws, just or unjust, all of my
Decrees, great or small, must be obeyed.

My son, in the storm of battle one man only can
Be trusted: The man who knows the value of
Obedience. That man will die beside me
If I order it. If I order it.

The curse of anarchy will breed destruction.
Bring ruin to our city. Destroy our homes.
Breed panic and defeat. There is no greater
Curse than anarchy and anarchy
Is bred of disobedience. I
Must defend the law. No man, no woman
Is above the law.

If I must fall, a man will bring me down.
Let no one say, "Creon gave
His power to a woman."

CHORUS

*Am I deceived by age?
Are my wits extinct?*

*My Lord, we hear your words,
We know you speak good sense.
We know you reason well.*

HAEMON

Father, the gods have given us a gift,
The gift of reason. I have no skill, no right,
No need to say that you misjudge. But
With good intentions, it might be said by others.

Father, I am your son. I can listen to the world
And hear its discontent. I am your ears, your eyes.
To see the shadows of the common people.
To hear their whispers in the dark, the words
They dare not say for fear of retribution.
They are terrified of you, to stand
Here face to face. But in every corner of
The city I hear these shadows speak:
They grieve for this young girl and for her innocence.
I hear their whispers in the dark:

CHORUS

*Her brother died in battle.
She buried him.
To keep him whole against
The hunger of wild dogs
And birds of prey
She buried him.
Creon should anoint her with a crown of gold,
Not summon her to death.*

HAEMON

Father, you rejoice in my success.
I celebrate your glory. You are my father,
I am your son. I beg you now to reason:
There is no man who always knows what's right.

No man can say the world is always wrong.
There is a kind of man who thinks that all
Great words of wisdom belong to him alone.
Unwrap his mind. Test him, break him open.
You will find him empty. It may be wise to yield.

CHORUS

Bend or break, bend or break, bend or break.

CHORUS LEADER

*A tree caught in a savage flood may live by yielding,
The branches that resist are broken, the roots are torn.*

CHORUS

Bend or break, bend or break, bend or break.

CHORUS LEADER

*A sail pulled tight will shred, the boat will overturn,
The captain down below, the ships' keel pointed to the sky.*

CHORUS

Bend or break, bend or break, bend or break.

Father, I beg you, give up your anger. Allow
Your heart to change. Though I am young I know
That I speak sense. None of us are born
With perfect wisdom. To learn in life we first
Must learn to listen.

CHORUS

*Haemon,
Learn from your father*

*Creon,
Learn from your son*

The truth lies in between.

CREON

What kind of man must beg a boy to be his tutor?

HAEMON

The kind of man that judges words not age.

CREON

I have judged your words. They boast of treason.

HAEMON

Then you misjudge.

CREON

The disease of treason has infected her.

HAEMON

She is no traitor. Listen. The citizens
Of Thebes deny her guilt.

CREON

Am I now ruled by Thebes?

HAEMON

If youth is folly, you have lost all signs
Of age. Listen to their voice.

CREON

I hear my voice.
My voice. O ne voice now rules this city.

HAEMON

This city is not yours alone to rule.

CREON

The law demands the king alone will rule.

HAEMON

Then rule an empty island by yourself.

CREON

You fight now for a woman.

HAEMON

Then you are now a woman. I fight for you.

CREON

And you defy your father.

HAEMON

I defy what is
Unjust in you, my father.

CREON

I defend the right of kingship and just rule.

HAEMON

There is no defense when you betray god's law.

CREON

She owns you now. You are accomplice in her crime.

HAEMON

Dissent is not a crime. I plead for you,
And for myself and for the spirits of the dead.

CREON

She will be dead before you marry her.

ANTIGONE by Sophocles

HAEMON

If she must die, she will not die alone.

CREON

And now you threaten me? Boy?

HAEMON

How can I threaten you? The sharpest sword
Cannot cut a mind that's empty of all sense.

CREON

Be careful, boy. My will can cut you to.

HAEMON

You are mad. So I'd tell the world,
Were you not my father.

CREON

Am I still your father?
You are this woman's slave.

HAEMON

The king can speak but never learned to listen.

CREON

Enough. No words. You'll pay for taunting me.
Bring her out. Bring the woman here.
The bridegroom waits for her to stand beside him.
Here she will stand. To die. And we will let you watch.

HAEMON

I will never see her die. And I will never
See your face again.
Rage, great king, great crimes commit.
Rage at your friends, and slaves who must submit.

CHORUS

There is danger, in the anger, of the young.

CREON

Let him go. Let him dream of power.
He cannot save those two girls from their death.

CHORUS LEADER

Is it your will to kill them both?

CREON

You're right. Not both. Ismene's hands are clean.

CHORUS LEADER

And for Antigone? What kind of death, exactly?

CHORUS

There is danger, in the anger, of the young.

CREON

*In a place without footsteps, a place of desolation,
I will find a cave,
A vault of stone,
To lock her in,
I'll seal her from the light and bury her alive.*

*I'll give her food but not enough to live,
Enough to die,
Enough so that no curse will haunt our city,
Enough for piety.*

*In that tomb beneath the earth
Let her pray to Hades,
Let the god of death,
Her only god,
Remove the stones*

*And set her free.
She will learn, but not in time,
The cost of worshipping the dead.*

CHORUS #4: EROS

*Caught in the net of desire
The gods and man grow mad.
Love like a warrior waits in the night
Run, try to escape
There is no place to hide.
From the cheeks and eyes of the maiden
Across the boundless seas
Into wild places
Caught by desire,
The mind tangles with frenzy.
The fist of desire
Turns the just unjust
Father angers son.
Captured by desire.
Irresistible desire.
Love is stronger than law.
When Eros plays, we burn.*

EPISODE #4

Chorus Leader, Antigone, Chorus, Creon

CHORUS LEADER

Look, now.
The law forbids our tears and yet we weep.
Here is Antigone. She walks a walk
We all must make but her destiny is now.
Her bridal chamber is a vault of stone.
Her bridegroom, death.

ANTIGONE

*I have begun a journey without end,
Across a darkened river,
An endless path to silence and to sleep.
No wedding day
No glorious hymn
I see the sun's last light
Today I lie down with my bridegroom, death.*

*Dark river never ending
All that remains for me is sleep.*

CHORUS

*Your death will bring you glory,
Your death will bring you fame,
Death chooses other mortals
But you have chosen death.
Not by sickness, not by war,
You have chosen death by law,
The law in your own image,
You go to death by choice.*

ANTIGONE

*Have you heard of the goddess Niobe?
How cruelly she died?
High on the top of a mountain,
She slowly turned to stone.
Petrified to stone.
The winter rain beat down on her
The snow tore at her eyes
And bitter tears ate at her neck and cut her breast of stone.
Dark river never ending
All that remains for me is sleep.*

CHORUS

Niobe was a goddess born

*And we are only mortals
But you will share Niobe's fate.
Your death will bring you glory,
Your death will bring you fame,
You go to death by choice.*

ANTIGONE

*Are you so great and rich, you men,
That you laugh at me before I'm dead?*

CHORUS LEADER

*You dared too much
You went too far-*

ANTIGONE

*Are you so great and rich, you men,
That you forget injustice?*

CHORUS LEADER

*You threw yourself against the throne of justice,
And there you fell.*

ANTIGONE

I call upon my only allies fire, earth and water

CHORUS LEADER

The crime of Oedipus, your father, stains your blood.

ANTIGONE

To remember this injustice.

CHORUS LEADER

The crime of Oedipus, your father, stains your blood.

ANTIGONE

I walk between the living and the dead.

*I was born of incest
My mother twisting with her husband-son,
My father coiling with his mother-wife,
Their sin now falls on me.
Their punishment, my life.*

*My brother, also cursed,
His death destroyed my life.
No pity for my pain.
I join the house of Oedipus in the dark.*

CHORUS

*Your pious deed demands our praise
But you defied the law.
The King must rule according to the law.
Your pride has been your ruin.
Your passion has betrayed you.
Obsession is your fate.*

ANTIGONE

*Do not grieve for what you do not love.
Let them drag me to my death.
I stand and through my tears
I look for one last time upon the sun:
In the sacred eye of fire, I see my fate.
Without a friend, unwed, unwept
But resolute, I die alone.*

CREON

Enough. If howls and moans could postpone death,
All men would wail forever. Lament and shed
Your tears, fate cannot see or hear you. You are
Not fit to dwell among the living. Take her now
To her new home. The one beneath the earth.
There let her live. Or die. It is her choice.
Her blood is not upon our hands and we

Are free of guilt.

ANTIGONE

Then take me to my prison, my forever
Bridal bed of stone the one beneath the earth.

For there I'll find my flesh, my blood,
The many of my house that Queen Persephone,
Goddess of the dead has beckoned home.
I am the last. My death is cruel. More cruel
Than all the rest. I die, still young.

And yet I hope. I hope to find my father,
And my mother waiting, and Eteocles, my brother.
They know me well. All three. At their three graves
I cleaned the three pale bodies with fire
Earth and water, with prayer and reverence.
I did no more for Polyneices. But for
That love I now must die. Great Creon has
Repaid my love with death.

What have I done? What sacred law have I defied?
For Creon's law, I'd bow to it if
A husband or a son had died. I'd let their bodies
Rot in the steaming dust unburied and alone.
Another husband could be found and with
That husband another son. But I have no mother now.
I have no father. I cannot bring another
Brother to the world. Can you understand
The choice that I have made?

I now can see what I will never see:
No marriage bed, no passion, no motherhood, no children's love.
Is this the order now of things? Is virtue
Now transgression? What is sacred? What profane?
There is no help from god or man. Is this
The wisdom that the gods too late have sent me?

If I have sinned, the gods should make me suffer.
If the sin is yours, I pray for you, great Creon,
A punishment as rich and deep as mine.

CHORUS LEADER

She has not changed. Relentless anger makes
A tempest of her mind.

CREON

No more delay.

ANTIGONE

And now I hear death speak.

CREON

You do. Two words: “No hope”.

ANTIGONE

City of Thebes; city of my house.
It is my time. At last my time for death
Has come. You men so great and rich look hard
On me, the last heartbeat of a line of kings.
The last of the house of Oedipus. Consider
My pain and judge the kind of men who make
These laws. And Judge my crime. I suffer doing right.
I die for reverence.

CHORUS #5: ENDURE

CHORUS LEADER

Not wealth, not war, not ships on great seas can deliver
Us from fate.

CHORUS
Endure

Endure
Suffer
Accept
Endure

CHORUS LEADER

The story goes: Danae with the seed of Zeus
Inside her was imprisoned in a tower. She never
Saw the light. And she was royal, like you.

CHORUS
Endure
Endure
Suffer
Accept
Endure

CHORUS LEADER

The story goes: an angry king taunted
Dionysus. Denied his ecstasy.
The king was tamed by madness. He learned
The power of the god. That king was royal like you.

CHORUS
Endure
Endure
Suffer
Accept
Endure

CHORUS LEADER

The story goes: The mighty Kleopatra, a daughter
Of the gods was imprisoned by her king when he
Found someone new to be his wife. The new queen
Hated Kleopatra's sons. She took a needle

From a loom and with its point, she blinded them.
The bloody empty circles that once could see
Cried out for vengeance. But there was none.
Kleopatra ran with the frenzy of wild horses
Up a mountain side. The boys sat on
An empty beach and cried a sightless cry.
Kleopatra was caught by destiny. Her fate
Had captured her. And she was royal like you.

CHORUS

Endure

Endure

Suffer

Accept

Endure

EPISODE #5

Tiresias, Creon, Chorus Leader, Chorus

TIRESIAS

I have come to speak to those who would rule Thebes.
This boy has lead me here. His two eyes see
For both of us. To follow the right path
The blind must follow those that still can see.

CREON

You've traveled far, Tiresias, to tell us what?

TIRESIAS

You will hear my words but you must listen.

CREON

I have always listened and been guided by you.

TIRESIAS

ANTIGONE by **Sophocles**

And done well.

CREON

I owe you much.

TIRESIAS

Remember that. And listen:
Today you walk the razor's edge of fate.

CREON

Such words from one as wise as you, could make
A weak man tremble. Tell us everything you see.

TIRESIAS

I will speak
To you of divination and seeing in the dark:
In a grove there sits an ancient chair surrounded
Day and night by swarms of birds. In that chair
I sit and listen to their secrets. Today
I heard a scream. No not a scream, it wasn't
Real, it was a new and foreign sound,
A shriek, a cry, a savage call of hatred,
A call to war. I could feel the birds, the frenzied
Beating of their wings, the claws ripping flesh,
The sharp teeth dripping blood piercing for the kill.
And I was afraid.

At a sacrificial alter I rushed to make
A blazing fire. But when I placed my offering
In the searing white hot flame, it would not burn.
The fire sputtered. The meat oozed fat. And smoked.
Bladders sucked in the heated fumes and stretched
Until they burst spitting acid bile into the air.
From thighs the bubbling fat and meat slid
Into the hissing embers leaving bones
Unburned and bare and white. This boy looked

At all the bones. He sees for me as I see
For you. He described them all to me. There were
No signs that could be read. The rites of sacrifice
Had failed.

Why has this sickness now infested Thebes?
You are the cause. The cause is you. Our sacrificial
Altars are polluted by the animals
That feast on Polyneices' unburied body.
The indecipherable birds, their gullets
Gorged with putrefying flesh. Their songs
Choked with greasy, carrion blood. The gods
Will not accept our prayers. The cause is you.
You are the cause.

Now, think, my son. No man is free from fault.
The man of judgment sees his mistake and changes
Course before it is too late. Why stab
A dead man twice? Why torment him now?
Where is the courage in murdering the dead?
Yield to the dead. Unyielding pride is folly.

My son, I wish you well. I seek your good.
I speak from wisdom. I offer you release.

CREON

You, old man, and all of you, bend
Yours bows, take aim and shoot at me. Go on.
Let me be your target.

You fortune tellers buy and sell your divinations
To those who pay the most. You pack me up
Like merchandise. Make profit on me. Who's
Paying you, old man? You cannot buy me.
I will not sell Polyneices' body for all the gold
Of India. Let eagles peck and rip and carry

ANTIGONE by **Sophocles**

Dripping plugs of flesh to garnish the throne
Of Zeus himself. What danger is in that?
No man can stain the glory of the gods.
But all men can fall hard when they sell their
Prophecies for gold.

TIRESIAS

Wisdom cannot be bought or sold.

CREON

Stupidity, it seems, is given free.

TIRESIAS

So you make it seem.

CREON

I will not descend to answer your abuse.

TIRESIAS

It's I who must descend to answer your abuse.
You were the first to call my visions lies.

CREON

Prophets lie for gold. It is your way.

TIRESIAS

As tyrants reach for power.

CREON

I am your king. Remember that.

TIRESIAS

What city would be left for you to rule without my wisdom?

CREON

Your virtue is not equal to your skill.
You are corrupt.

TIRESIAS

Do not make me tell you everything I see.
There are secrets that are better left unsaid.

CREON

Say them. Or do you only work for gold.

TIRESIAS

Be careful. There is no profit in my words for you.

CREON

Nor will you profit in your words to me.
You cannot buy my honor with deceit.

TIRESIAS

Then listen:
I will tell you what my blind eyes see.
Before the sun can set and rise three times
Death will pay for death. Your son who started
Life in the warm blood deep inside you
Will be dead. Murder will be paid.

You have overturned the order of the gods.
You have sealed a living soul beneath the earth
While corpses lie on the ground naked and unblessed;
Denied by your decree a covering of dust.

That corpse of Polyneices does not belong
To you. Nor to the gods that rule the world
Of light. You have robbed the spirits of the shadowworld.
They are waiting for that corpse. You have shown them disrespect
And they will punish you. Avenging spirits
Will rise from hell and descend from heaven and entangle

ANTIGONE by **Sophocles**

You in an endless net of pain. Pain
Will pay for pain.

Do I speak these words for gold? Is that
What you believe? How much have I been paid?
What profit have I earned to tell you this?

Sons from cities far away from Thebes
Who died in last night's battle will be carried home.
Dogs and beasts and hungry birds of prey
Will puncture their unburied bodies and carry
Off an unblest feast, in their dripping, gaping mouths.
And shreds of meat, the flesh of once proud sons,
Will drop like undigested rain on every
Home and sacred altar. The smell of that
Pollution will travel from those cities back to you.
It is your crime. You are the source. You will
Be imprisoned in a chain of never ending hate.

My arrows have been sharpened by my anger.
But I am never wrong. You will feel pain.
You will not escape. Boy, guide me to
My home. Let the tyrant king search
For a younger target. Someday perhaps you'll pray
For words more wise than those you spoke today.

CHORUS LEADER

My king,
He warns you of destruction soon to come
To all of us but most of all, to you.

CREON

I know. I am afraid. I cannot yield. But what if I
Resist? The doom he sees for me is endless.
My mind is torn. I'm pulled in two directions.

CHORUS LEADER

Hair that once was black has now turned white.
In all that time, he never has been wrong.

CREON

I know.
But I defend the law. "No one above the law."
How can I surrender the passion of my heart?

CHORUS LEADER

Be warned. You stand on the razor's edge of fate.
One more mistake and you will fall forever.

CREON

I know.
To yield is hard but I fear I do not have
The strength to war with fate. Tell me each of you,
What should I do?

CHORUS

(intercut with Chorus Leader)

Yield.

Yield.

Yield.

Yield.

Yield.

Yield.

CHORUS LEADER

*Release Antigone from her mountain prison.
Bury Polyneices' with the dead.
And do it now. With your own hands. Before
It is too late. Time is running out.*

CHORUS

(intercut with Chorus Leader)

Yield.

Yield.

Yield.

Yield.

Yield.

Yield.

CREON

Release her. Yes. Free her now. Yes.
I'll go myself and do it. With my own hands.
Follow me with axes, spades and picks.
To open up the mountain before it is
Too late. I have overturned myself.
And since I have imprisoned her, I will
Tear away each stone with my own hands
To set her free.
The gods will crush you when they are betrayed.
Eternal laws of ancient gods must be obeyed.

CHORUS # 6: BACCHUS

CHORUS

*Dionysus, known by many names
You were born to Zeus.
You chose our city Thebes to be your home.
Now help us, Dionysis
Heal us, help us, Dionysis
Bacchus, Dionysus
God of many names.*

*Stars flame and burst to honor you,
Voices sing the night.*

Nymphs wild with passion dance your sacred name.

*Now help us, Dionysis
Heal us, help us, Dionysis
Bacchus, Dionysus
God of many names.*

*Bacchus, Dionysis
Bachus, Bachus, Dionysis,
Bachus, Bachus, Bachus, Bachus,
Dionysis, Dionysis
Purify us, Purify us,
Bachus, Bachus, Bachus, Bachus, Bachus
Dionysis.*

EPISODE #6

Messenger, Eurydice, Chorus Leader

MESSENGER

Citizens of Thebes, listen: all life is change.
Do not praise or blame a man too soon.
In a moment fate can raise him up to glory
Or throw him down to ruin. There is no divination
Strong enough to see into tomorrow.

Who here did not envy Creon? Yesterday?
An hour ago? He saved our city, Thebes.
We crowned him king. All powerful king. Proud father
Of a noble son. Now? Nothing. All is lost.
All joy is lost. When happiness is gone
A man is not alive. He is a dead man,
Breathing.

Add up all your money and the extravagance
Of kingship. Then subtract from it all joy

ANTIGONE by **Sophocles**

And happiness. What of worth remains?
A life that is a shadow of a wisp of smoke.

CHORUS LEADER

What new sorrow do you bring us? To inflict more grief
On this royal house. Tell us your news.

MESSENGER

Two dead. The guilty one still lives.

CHORUS LEADER

Name the dead.
And the murderer. Now.

HAEMON

Haemon is dead.

MESSENGER

Murdered by one whose blood is royal.

CHORUS LEADER

The blood of both are royal. Did Creon kill him?
Or did Haemon take his own life?

HAEMON

Haemon held the sword.

CREON

Creon gave him reason to use that sword
Against himself.

TIRESIAS

Tiresias saw it all.
He said it would be so.

MESSENGER

That is all I have to tell you. Now you must now decide

What you will do.

CHORUS LEADER

Wait. Look. Eurydice, wife of Creon,
Is coming from the palace. Has she heard you speak
Of her son's death? Or is she here by chance?

EURIDYCE

On my way to prayers, as I stood by the door
And unlocked the bolt, I heard a voice speak
Of happiness. And then I fell. My terror
Drained my senses. There is no happiness.
Tell me everything. I want to hear
It all. I have known grief. More than once.

MESSENGER

My noble queen, I was there. With my own eyes,
I saw it all and I will tell you everything.
I will not comfort you. I will not shield
You from the truth. The truth, though hard, is best.

I followed Creon beyond the seventh gate
To a plain above the hill.

CREON

There he found the body,
Polyneices' body, what remained of it. Dogs
Had torn and shredded it. First, Creon prayed.
He begged the angry gods for mercy. Then
He washed the flesh and bone, surrounded
It with fresh cut branches, and burned it all.
At last with his own hands he took our native soil,
And buried the smoldering ashes in a high mound of earth.

MESSENGER

Then he turned away and quickly walked

ANTIGONE by Sophocles

Toward the mountain cave where Antigone, imprisoned-

ANTIGONE

Was waiting in her bridal chamber on a bed
Of stone to mate with death.

MESSENGER

As Creon drew near to that unholy place-

CREON

He heard a mournful voice, from deep within
The cave, an echo of never ending grief,
A voice calling out in anguish. Creon cried:
“That’s Haemon’s voice. My son’s own voice. I can see
The future. Are my fears real? Am I a prophet?
Is this the darkest path that I will ever walk?
Or do the gods now play my life as if it were a toy.
Run. Tell the guards to tear away the stones.
Then look inside and tell me that is not
My Haemon’s voice.”

MESSENGER

The stones were lifted and he looked deep into the darkness.
There he saw-

ANTIGONE

Antigone hanging in the air,
A noose of linen from her dress tied around her neck.

HAEMON

Haemon was embracing her, his arms around her waist.
And he was calling to her-

ANTIGONE

Though she could not
Hear him. Her spirit walked among the dead.

HAEMON

Haemon cursed his father and pleaded for the rites of marriage
That now would never be.

CREON

Creon made
His way into the cave and fell groaning to his knees,
A wounded animal crying out in pain:
“Son, my son, come out from here. I’m begging you, my son.
What are you doing? Have you gone mad? Come from
This place. There is nothing here for you but death.”

HAEMON

Haemon turned on him and stared, an unforgiving
Hatred in his eyes. Without a word, Haemon spat
In Creon’s face, then drew a sword and lunged at him.

CREON

Creon moved quickly to escape.

HAEMON

Haemon stopped and turned away.
He slowly put the handle of the two-edged sword upon the ground
The point against his side. And then, without a word,
He leaned his weight against the pointed blade
And drove it deep, to half its length, into his body.

MESSENGER

With his last strength, Haemon gently embraced
Antigone, whispering words to her I could not hear.
And then there were no words.

HAEMON

From his mouth
Came only flecks of blood,

ANTIGONE

That stained her white cheeks, red.

MESSENGER

They cut her down and placed her on that bed of stone
With Haemon next to her-

ANTIGONE-HAEMON

Corpse embracing corpse.
A marriage rite at last in the sanctuary
Of the dead.

MESSENGER

This is a lesson to us all:
Reckless pride will bring a man to ruin.

CHORUS LEADER

The queen is gone without a word.

MESSENGER

She will not put her sorrow on display.
She will mourn with dignity inside the house.
Her silence is discretion.

CHORUS LEADER

I am not sure.
There are times when frenzied wailing is less ominous than silence.

MESSENGER

You're right. I'll follow her. Her heart is deep in pain.
There may be dangers that her silence cannot tame.

EXODOS

Creon, Messenger, Chorus Leader, Chorus

CHORUS LEADER

Here, at last, is Creon, the king himself.
And with him a silent monument to his crime.

CREON

*Here father, and son,
Slayer and slain,
The young will die
When the old are blind.
The fault is mine,
My son, my son.
So young, so young,
The fault is mine,
My son.*

CHORUS LEADER

*You see the truth but not in time.
You speak of wisdom. It is too late.*

CHORUS

Eurydice

CREON

*The gods have made me suffer
They twist my joy to pain
They force me down a crooked road
Of madness and despair.*

CHORUS

Eurydice

CREON

*But I have learned to suffer.
The gods have taught me well:
All men must live in pain.*

All men must live in pain.

CHORUS

Eurydice

MESSENGER

My lord, your present pain is not half done.
Two sorrows will soon multiply your grief.

CREON

There can be no greater sorrow.

MESSENGER

There is no end to grief:
The queen, true mother of your son, is dead.

CHORUS

Eurydice

CREON

Can you gods drive me any further
Into darkness? I was dead and now I die
A second time. Is there more pain for me?
First son, then wife and mother. There is no end.
Is it all true?

MESSENGER

Look. See for yourself.

CHORUS

Eurydice

CREON

Sorrow follows sorrow. Death will marry death.
I see a double loss. I see my son.

I see my wife. I held them in my arms.
How did she die? Speak. Tell me. How?

MESSENGER

She took a two-edged knife and stood and prayed,
Before an altar. A darkness fell across her eyes.
She blessed the memory of her older son, long dead,
And then blessed Haemon, her second son to die.
She placed the point here below her heart and drove
The blade up to the hilt.

CREON

I am the cause. I took her life as if
I held the knife.

MESSENGER

With her dying breath,
She cursed the evil that had deprived her of
Her sons and the evildoer.

CREON

It is my guilt. What remains
Of me is nothing.

MESSENGER

She cursed you, my lord,
For the death of both her sons.

CREON

Give me a sword. One thrust
And I am free from all my grief.

CHORUS LEADER

There is no death for you. Not now. That's in
The future. We cannot alter fate.

CREON

The day that brings my death will be the best
Day of my life.

CHORUS LEADER

Do not pray for death. There are things today
That must be done. We each still have our duty.

CREON

Death is now my life.

CREON

*Take me from the sight of men.
Blind me to the light.
Deliver me to darkness,
The night that has no dawn.*

CHORUS

*Pray no more for death.
It is decreed that man will suffer.
That there is no escape.*

CREON

*Relentless pride,
My blindness was deep.
My wife, my son
Wherever I look.
I have no more strength.
Please lead me away
My destiny is pain.*

CHORUS

*Pray no more for death.
It is decreed that man will suffer.
That there is no escape.*

CREON

*Take me from the sight of men.
Blind me to the light.
Deliver me to darkness,
The night that has no dawn.*

CODA

ALL

*Happiness is made of wisdom and reverence for the gods.
The words of proud and arrogant men entangle them in doom.*

CREON (unmasked)

*What we have shown you here
Is a man through pain grown wise.
His doom was deep as his pride was high,
His punishment as hard as sin.
The gods will break your will,
Until you act with wisdom.*

*Don't wait for pain to give you wisdom,
Don't wait for age to make you wise.*

ALL (unmasked)

*Don't wait for pain to give you wisdom,
Don't wait for age to make you wise.*

END

ANTIGONE *by Sophocles*