

# ANTIGONE

BY SOPHOCLES

in a new version by

Adrian Osmond

for Lung Ha's Theatre Company

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# CAST

(in order of appearance)

TEIRESIAS

*A blind prophet*

GUIDE

*Attendant to Teiresias*

ANTIGONE

*Daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta*

ISMENE

*Sister of Antigone*

CREON

*King of Thebes, Brother of Jocasta,  
Uncle of Antigone and Ismene*

HAEMON

*Son of Creon and Eurydice,  
Fiancé of Antigone*

EURYDICE

*Wife of Creon*

3 GUARDS

2 MESSENGERS

and

CHORUS

*of Theban citizens*

## Some Choices:

The Guide's role is silent. However, if desired he could speak some of Teiresias' text (justified by the prophet's old age and extreme exhaustion). On p.42, before "I was sat listening", Teiresias could say, "My Guide will speak my words." The Guide would speak the following section, with Teiresias taking over for "You are polluting this place" onwards. If needed, the Guide could also speak the section "The trail of calamity" through to "You will not be spared a single thing" on p.44.

Guard & Messenger lines can be divided differently, depending on the number of performers (only one Messenger is necessary).

Some of the Messenger story can be represented visually without using the text. (On p.48, after "There inside, Antigone was dangling", cut to "Blood was spilling over the stones.")

SCENE ONE

*The City of Thebes.*

*It is night. A hollow wind is passing through this place.*

*There is a mound of bodies. No faces are showing. Everyone is huddled together on the ground.*

*There is a rumbling in the distance.*

*On the wind, voices are heard.*

Chorus:           We are divided.  
                      Always we are divided.

                      Our land is dying.  
                      Almost nothing grows.  
                      What grows is deformed.

                      Will this never end?

*Teiresias is sitting in the distance. A dirty rag covers his infected eyes. His young Guide is huddled at his feet.*

*Teiresias may speak the following passage. Or it may be shared between him and others. These could be narrators, or people who enact the story of Oedipus, Jocasta, and their children. Either*

*way, the events should be represented visually in some manner as the tale unfolds.*

Teiresias:       *(to Guide)* Now listen.  
I can see what will be.  
That is my blessing,  
And it is my blight.  
But before you face the future,  
You must understand the past.

So.  
There was a man.

A man called Oedipus.  
And that man became a king,  
King of the city of Thebes.

He came and saved the city  
From a terrible scourge.  
He was hailed as a hero  
And handed the crown.

But, unaware,  
He brought his own sickness.  
And this new plague  
Grew and grew.

A fever spread  
Through each family.

It emptied every woman's womb.

The soil stank.

Streams turned to sludge.

So Oedipus sought

This infection's origin.

He knew that some obscene deed

Must be the sordid source.

So he vowed to punish

Whoever was to blame.

His hand gripped a blade

To administer justice –

He himself

Would cut away

The cancerous curse.

This proud man

Was too proud –

His eyes could not see.

He did not detect

The germ of the disease

That swarmed within him.

He was the cause.

Oedipus, this king,

Had killed his own father

And never known.

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

He had married his own mother  
And never known.

And out of their sweaty bed  
Four children had sprung –

Two boys,

Two girls.

Each one had screamed  
As it scratched its way out  
Between its mother's legs...

I saw it all  
In my visions.  
So I told him all.

And when Oedipus beheld  
The truth laid bare,  
Our king kept his word.  
With that knife  
He swiftly slashed out his sight.

Then Jocasta,  
His mother and his wife,  
Twisted a stained sheet around her neck,  
And squeezed out her squirming life.

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

Oedipus abandoned his city.

But the people's suffering  
Still did not cease.

Here, blood seeps so swiftly  
Beneath the sand –  
The world is a wounded hole,  
Ever hungry for more.

The two sons of Oedipus  
Held each other's hands.

Eteocles.

Polyneices.

Twins of destruction.

They agreed to take  
The throne up in turns.  
One year each.

Eteocles ascended first.

But as he sat in the palace,  
Power puffed up his chest.

Pride again.

He was too proud to leave.

So now, at this moment,  
Polyneices and an army  
Are on the attack.

Each of these brothers  
Is reaching too far...

They stretch their arms  
To launch their spears.  
Listen to those spikes  
Slicing through the air!

Each brother  
Is watching their own weapon fly.  
They do not see the dart  
Diving for their own chest.

Soon both bodies  
Will be pinned to the ground.  
And again this place  
Will plunge into black.

Thebes has been battered  
Too many times.  
These people are starving  
For a scrap of peace.

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But there may be still  
More crimes to come.

Their new king shall be Creon,  
Uncle to those bleeding boys.

Will he see which deed is right,  
And which deed is wrong?

Come now, and lead me.  
Let us seek out the signs  
Before it is too late.

*Teiresias is led away by his Guide, as Antigone and Ismene enter.*

## SCENE TWO

*They are holding hands. Ismene has been crying.*

Antigone:        My only sister,  
                      Twinned with my orphaned soul,  
                      Will this agony ever end?  
                      Is every breath of ours a curse?  
                      The same dark blood that flows in me  
                      Also flows through you –  
                      The blood of our father.  
                      But where is that father now?

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Ismene: Buried under ground.

Antigone: And where is our mother?

Ismene: Buried under ground.

Antigone: And our brothers?

Ismene: Both dead in the dirt.

Antigone: But not buried yet.  
And have you heard the proclamation?

Ismene: All I heard was  
The sound of the spears  
That split our siblings in two.

Antigone: Then come closer to listen.  
For I will catch the shards  
Of your soul as they fall.

Creon is approaching  
To tell the city his news.  
This uncle of ours,  
Our new ruler,  
Will brand one brother a hero,  
But the other a traitor.  
Eteocles will be honoured.  
But Polyneices will be pronounced

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

An enemy of his native land.  
One brother gets a glorious funeral.  
The other gets to rot,  
Unburied, and unwept.

His twisted limbs will stretch  
Across this naked land.  
His pale skin  
Will be scorched by the sun.  
Dogs will wolf down his guts,  
Rats will snap off his fingers,  
And birds will swoop down  
To dig out his heart.  
The wind will howl  
While we must stay silent.  
No tears. No moans.

Ismene: But why must we keep quiet?

Antigone: Because, if you were caught,  
One touch of his corpse  
Would cause your death.  
You'd be stoned in the street.  
So now, Ismene,  
You know what we must do.

Ismene: What?

Antigone: Our family duty.

We two, together,  
Must bind our bare hands,  
Gather dust in our palms,  
And cast them  
Over our brother.

Ismene: But if our uncle says –

Antigone: That man has no right  
To keep me from what is mine.  
We cannot betray our brother,  
His body awaits –

Ismene: Antigone, no!  
This pain has to stop!  
We saw our dad weep blood.  
We saw our mum turn blue.  
We are the last survivors.  
I will not be next.  
Let's push beyond  
The pull of the past!

Antigone: The past is still here,  
Forever and always!

Ismene: But we can't defy orders,  
We can't defeat  
The will of a whole city,  
We don't have the power!

Antigone: We have as much power as we choose!  
Without us, our dead brother  
Is doomed to wander.  
If we do not scatter some earth on his body  
His soul can never come to rest.

Ismene: You'd die for this?

Antigone: It's the dead, not the living,  
That we must obey.  
Their laws have lasted longer  
Than any tribe or king.

Ismene: Antigone –

Antigone: I don't have a choice.  
I don't know how to bend.

Ismene: But sister,  
You are engaged to Creon's son!  
Think of Haemon,  
Of how he would feel  
At the loss of your love –

Antigone: All my desire is devoted to my brother.  
I am isolated already.  
Such a loneliness  
Cannot be lifted in this world.

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Ismene: ... well, at least,  
I will keep your secret safe.

Antigone: Secret?! No!  
Scream my deed from the city walls!

Ismene: Sister, stop!

Antigone: My blood is burning!!

Ismene: But your look is so cold!  
Your words spit like flames,  
I can't find you any more!

Antigone: My earlier face  
Was the one that was false.  
This is me now!  
At last I am Antigone,  
And I was not born to submit.  
But you, off you go  
To cower in fear.

Ismene: I am only afraid for *you*.  
Your heart is your undoing.

Antigone: And yours is heaped in shame.

*Antigone starts to leave, with Ismene following.*

Antigone:        Don't you dare follow!  
                      Soon I shall hold hands  
                      With my brother's spirit.  
                      I will lie down with someone I love –  
  
                      And you will be left alone.

*Antigone and Ismene leave in different directions.*

### SCENE THREE

*Gradually, the Chorus rise up from the ground, shielding their eyes from the growing light. Some are wounded, bandaged. They help each other to their feet.*

Chorus:        The battle is done.  
                      The sun's rays arise,  
                      Its blades shimmer and burn  
                      Through these brooding clouds.  
                      Has a golden peace  
                      Arrived in Thebes at last?  
  
                      Thunder blasted the army apart –  
                      Soldiers lie scattered,  
                      Limp and lifeless,  
                      Outside our walls.

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

So this is victory.

For us to survive,

They had to fall.

Let's live simply now.

Let's do what we are told.

*But some of the Chorus sense a strange smell wafting near.*

#### SCENE FOUR

*Then as the Chorus see Creon in the distance, they all raise their arms to point at his approach.*

Chorus:            Here comes our new king  
                         With his wife and his son.

*Creon enters with Haemon and Eurydice on either side.*

Creon:            My loyal citizens,  
                         I stand united with my family,  
                         With each one of you.

                         Through these turbulent years  
                         You bravely defended  
                         Our desolate streets  
                         And our barren fields.  
                         Your homes are safe at last.

Now it falls to me  
And my frail, human hands  
To hold the heavy burden of power.

So hear my pledge.  
Never again will you endure such strife.  
I will act for all of you.  
I will devote everything I possess  
To protect your prosperity.

Some who wear crowns turn into cowards.  
They seek approval, applause,  
And are too weak to act.  
Others prize the wants of one  
Over the needs of all.  
Such kings are vermin –  
They sit up high but sink so low.

For the city is what binds us.  
The city is our strength.  
Our safety and security  
Depend on absolute union  
Under my command.

So here is my first decision,  
My keystone decree.  
The offspring of Oedipus  
And of my dear sister

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

Have each slain the other.  
Let us judge them by their loyalty.  
One son, Eteocles,  
Died while defending us.  
He shall be buried with honour.  
The other –  
Outcast Polyneices,  
Plotted with our enemies  
To oust us.  
He will lie, untouched,  
And exiled where he fell.

When alive he longed  
To set our roofs on fire.  
Now his raw flesh will crack  
Open in the sun.

Chorus: Your word is law.

Creon: Guards already patrol  
The perimeter of the body.  
And if anyone breaks my command –

*His eyes fix on them.*

Creon: – then every one of you  
Must break that person too.

Chorus: Only someone desiring death

Would dare to disobey.

SCENE FIVE

*Three Guards enter.*

Guard 1:           Royal king, we all agreed to come,  
                      But it took us longer to arrive  
                      Than what we had planned.  
                      Our heads said “go forwards”,  
                      But our feet went back.  
                      They did not obey!  
                      Anyway, I’m only speaking first  
                      Because I lost the bet,  
                      So the most important thing to say is – ...

Creon:             What?

Guard 1:           It wasn’t my fault.

Guard 2:           I didn’t do it –

Guard 3:           Don’t blame me!

Guard 1:           I didn’t see a thing!

Guard 3:           – That’s what he says.

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- Creon:            See what?  
                      You may be guards,  
                      But here you have no need  
                      To watch your words.
- Guard 1:         The body is covered –  
                      Just a sprinkling of earth.  
                      But that's enough to break your law  
                      And release a soul.
- Creon:            Who dared do this?
- Guards:          *(all)* Not me! Not us!
- Guard 3:         We beheld the deed  
                      With the dawn –
- Guard 2:         But we could not spot  
                      A shred of evidence.
- Guard 1:         No footprints –
- Guard 2:         – no paw prints –
- Guard 3:         – no mark from man or beast.
- Chorus:          So could this deed be caused  
                      By some invisible foe?

Creon:           How can you utter  
                  An idea of such idiocy?  
                  What would you have me do?  
                  Imprison the wind??  
                  No, before I heard just whispers  
                  But now I have my proof.  
                  Tracherous enemies are still here among us.  
                  They prize Polyneices' decomposing shell.  
                  They are plotting in their corners to rise up again,  
                  They mock me,  
                  They thwart me in my mission for peace.  
                  Could they even corrupt my guards?

Guards:         What?

Creon:           Did the glint of gold avert your eyes?

Guards:         No!

Creon:           Then prove your innocence –  
                  Identify the guilty  
                  And bring them to me.  
                  Place them before my eyes –  
                  Or you will pay the price.

*Creon exits with his wife and son.*

Guard 1:        How can a ruler  
                  Who wants to be right

Get it so wrong?

Guard 2:       Let's sneak off  
                  And never come back.

*The Guards leave.*

SCENE SIX

Chorus:       That smell...  
                  ...The body?  
                  Does its odour grow?

Where will this lead?

Humans always astonish.  
Once we were savage –  
Beat each other with rocks.  
Now we build towers  
With those same stones.

When we were starving, we slew some beasts.  
When we were cold, we wore their coats.  
When we were soaking, we built a shelter.

We tamed our breath,  
Turned it to speech,  
So words could unravel

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

The world's mysteries.

Death is still a secret...

Should we search for a cure?

How do you know

When you reach too far?

### SCENE SEVEN

*The Guards re-enter, gripping onto Antigone.*

Guards:           Caught her this time!

*The Chorus can't believe what they see, whispering "Antigone?" to each other, the sound growing until Antigone cuts them all off by shouting –*

Antigone:        Yes, I am Antigone!!  
                      Now you notice me!

*– just as Creon arrives.*

Creon:            I know your name full well.  
                      My own niece, my sister's daughter,  
                      Engaged to my son.  
                      Why the need for restraint?

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

Guard 1: We were unlucky earlier,  
But oh so lucky now!

Guard 2: We swore we wouldn't return –  
Oh well, another broken promise –

Guard 3: So there we go!  
She's captured, and we're free.

Creon: Wait – what did you see?

Guard 1: We got back, and as soon  
As we stripped bare  
That slimy stinky body  
And scraped off the dirt,  
This girl rushed forward!  
A whirling wind  
Tore at the earth.  
She was shrieking, cursing,  
She flung dry dust in every direction.

Creon: Do you deny it?

Antigone: I embrace it.

Creon: You knew my law?

Antigone: Every ugly word.

Creon: Your ears were open but refused to hear?

Antigone: Did you think your decree  
Could override eternity?  
That you could unseat  
Unwritten, ancient truths?  
You are a man.  
You and your wishes  
Only last a moment.  
I listen to laws that live forever.

Creon: And in reward  
Your own life will be brief.

Antigone: So much the better.  
There's less pain in dying  
Than in leaving a duty undone.

Creon: So she thrills in flouting my authority!  
In tearing at the unified will of our state!  
*(to Antigone)*  
You ate food from my table.  
Now you spew that kindness  
Out in my face?  
*(to the Guards)*  
Go, fetch her guilty sister,  
She's sure to have  
An equal share in this shame.

*Some Guards exit.*

Antigone:       Guilt and shame?  
                  Surely you mean glory!  
                  Everyone here agrees  
                  That you are in the wrong –  
                  Only they are too terrified to tell.

Creon:            Your brother was our enemy!

Antigone:        But he was still my brother!  
                  Nothing exists inside of me but love.

*Creon snorts.*

Creon:            Love for just one brother,  
                  Who murdered the other?

Antigone:        Love for them both!

Creon:            But they were not equal!

Antigone:        Are we not all equal in the end?

Creon:            Well you will find out that answer  
                  Soon enough.

SCENE EIGHT

*The Guards bring in Ismene.*

Chorus:           Look – Ismene!  
                      Adoration for her sister  
                      Drips down her cheeks.

Creon:            Come forward and confess your complicity.

Ismene:           It's true... I stand by my sister,  
                      The same as when we committed the crime.

Antigone:        What? You dare to speak such lies  
                      When you did not dare to do the deed?  
                      Don't put this coward near me.  
                      She's a stranger to defiance.

Ismene:           All I want now is to die with you.

Antigone:        You made your choice –  
                      Live with it and live on.

Creon:            These girls claim  
                      To possess such principles,  
                      But it seems to me  
                      They've simply lost their minds!

Ismene:           Dearest king, please think again –  
                      Make our family's suffering stop.

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

How can you steal this bride  
From your son?

Creon: Her beliefs are barren.  
He will find warmer embraces elsewhere,  
More fertile fields in which to drive his plough.

Antigone: Oh, Haemon –

Ismene: Antigone, no,  
Don't leave me behind!

*Ismene tries to hug Antigone. Antigone doesn't flinch.*

Antigone: Don't you dare shed a tear.

*Ismene dries her eyes. Antigone spits in her face.*

Creon: I have made my decision.  
Whether Ismene was obedient or not,  
She knew of the plan but did not inform.  
Tie them with chains  
And take them to the cage.  
They can await my orders there.

*Guards exit with Antigone and Ismene.*

SCENE NINE

Chorus:           It is impossible  
                      To escape your inheritance.  
                      A ravenous curse can never lift.

                      That girl dropped some dirt.  
                      Could she ever have been stopped?  
                      What force was it  
                      That opened her fist?

SCENE TEN

*Some of the Chorus point towards Haemon; others try to copy and do the same, but seem unsure of where exactly they should point.*

                      Haemon approaches.  
                      Haemon, your sole son.

*Haemon enters.*

Creon:            So Haemon, have you heard your father's verdict?  
                      Is your respect undiminished,  
                      No matter what I do?

Haemon:          Father, I revere you and your experience.  
                      Above all else, I am your son.  
                      I cannot marry without your approval.  
                      I submit to your will.

Creon: As always, Haemon,  
Your obedience fills me with pride.  
For if I could not rely  
On this bond of blood,  
How could I trust  
A stranger in the street?  
If dissension is not destroyed  
It leads on to outright anarchy.  
An individual must never  
Overrule the greater good.  
To maintain peace,  
I must be as merciless  
As in a battle.  
Antigone turned her back on us,  
And on you.  
So now she shall be married  
To the grave instead.

Chorus: This sounds like sense.

Haemon: You are right to acclaim  
The bond between us.  
For this is what I wanted to share.  
It is hard for you  
In your exalted position  
To hear what is whispered  
In the streets below.  
Not least when your judgements

Are fuelling fresh fear.  
My love and respect for you  
Make it my role  
To take people's thoughts  
From their tongues to your ear.

Creon: Very well.

Haemon: Just as you do, they prize family.  
So people say  
Antigone should be spared.  
They don't wish to smash her head  
With a storm of stones.  
They feel she should be honoured  
For respecting her duty to her brother.

Creon: – no –

Haemon: They think she is noble.  
They think she is brave.  
They think she is innocent in her heart.

Creon: How can you speak these words?

Haemon: Because I love you.  
I ask you to hear what *I* have heard.  
Listen to me, like I listen to *you*.  
I want you to be  
An even greater governor.

You alone can't possess  
All the wisdom of the city –  
You alone can't always  
Be in the right.

Chorus: Both of you speak wise words.  
Perhaps you could listen a little to each other?

Creon: What, listen to this boy?  
The pupil turned teacher?  
So, this woman's not wicked?

Haemon: According to the street.

Creon: We should respect the rebel?

Haemon: That is what I hear.

Creon: So must I, ruler of Thebes,  
Defer to every piece of prattle  
That is bandied about in alleyways  
Or tossed amongst the rubble?  
Can every citizen now instruct me?  
No, someone must take charge,  
Must point towards a path.  
Only one person can issue orders  
And that one is me!

Haemon: This land, its power,

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

Does not belong to one man.

Creon: You are in the wrong – that is my right.

Haemon: But a city teems with thoughts –

Creon: So it needs one to dominate,  
To say “This is my way,  
And you are mine.”

Haemon: Don’t be so stubborn.  
It’s only one mistake.  
Can you not feel inside  
That you are doing wrong?

Creon: First my niece disobeys a direct command.  
Now my own and only son  
Ascends in jealousy against me –

Haemon: – out of love –

Creon: – for a girl –

Haemon: – for you! –

Creon: Show your father respect in public!

Haemon: Show respect to your people!

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

Creon: You are pathetic, an embarrassment,  
Swayed by your emotions –

Haemon: – as you should be too,  
But not by rage!

Even the elements can alter their course.  
A rushing torrent in a river can bend.  
The furious wind can switch direction.

You could hurt us all with your pride.

Creon: She broke my law.

Haemon: By obeying a greater one.

Creon: Your plan may be to abandon me for her,  
But you two will never marry –  
There is only a moment left of her life!

Haemon: If she dies, she will not die alone.

Creon: So now you dare to threaten me?  
Is everything in Thebes still so sick?  
Then medicine must be swallowed at once –  
Bring Antigone, quick!  
Commence execution!  
I'll show you power,  
I'll show you strength!

You'll all stone her this instant,  
Until her skull splits and  
Her sweetness spills over  
The feet of this boy.

Haemon: No! I won't watch,  
And never again  
Will your repulsive eyes  
Alight on me!

*Haemon leaves.*

SCENE ELEVEN

Creon: Go then, you coward, and run!

Chorus: *(to Creon)* He's desperate.

Creon: He's no danger.  
The time has come  
For these girls to die.

Chorus: So – you condemn both?

Creon: Both?  
No, no, possibly only one.  
I can heed advice when it bears some sense.  
It seems Ismene's hands may be clean.

Chorus: But stoning for her sister?

Creon: Well... we won't throw stones.  
Something more private, perhaps.  
We will place her in a deep and desolate cave.  
And then roll a huge boulder  
Across its mouth.  
To stop her cries from causing corruption.  
And in that dank darkness  
We will leave a little food.  
That will let her last long enough  
To realise her wrong.

*Creon exits to issue the instructions.*

## SCENE TWELVE

Chorus: So much savagery –  
Stemming from love.  
When passions take hold  
You lose all reason.  
You rush towards ruin.

That stench still spreads.  
The sky descends.  
The wind lifts.  
We will need shelter

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

Before this day is done.

SCENE THIRTEEN

*Antigone enters under Guard.*

Antigone...  
As if walking to an altar,  
To be wedded to death.  
But no bridal bed.  
Instead, everlasting rest.  
I cannot stop my eyes  
From filling with tears.  
Can this be right?  
It feels so wrong.

Antigone: Farewell sun.  
Your face will not rise on a single day  
When I hold a husband.  
Or shine on the features  
Of my daughters or my sons.  
This last cold light illuminates all  
That could have been.

Chorus: You made your choice.

Antigone: I had no choice.

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

Chorus:           You stretched your hand too far.  
                      That plague your father brought  
                      Still boils in your blood.

Antigone:        Each death has bred another.

Chorus:           You could not escape your stubbornness.  
                      Or escape your pride.

Antigone:        Why do you hurl more harsh words at me?  
                      Where is Haemon?  
                      Where is my sister?  
                      Will no one mourn for me?

SCENE FOURTEEN

*Creon enters.*

Creon:            Enough talk.  
                      Take her away.

Antigone:        My uncle's fear  
                      Will let him wait no longer.  
                      I hope my parents will hold me soon.  
                      My brothers too.  
                      I tended to their bodies  
                      With these fragile hands.  
                      And this is my reward.

I was born here, you people –  
This city was always my home.  
I was a princess once...

Oh, the wind is dying down.  
Not much of a breeze now.  
Well.  
If I have been wronged,  
Let it turn into a tempest  
And tear this place apart.

*The Guards start to take her away. Suddenly, her mask of dignity slips, and she starts screaming, desperately trying to break free.*

*The Guards pull her away as she continues to scream.*

### SCENE FIFTEEN

Chorus:           There will be no protection  
                      If her dark wish ever arrives.  
                      Destiny, fate may be unknown,  
                      But such merciless force  
                      Can never be denied.

*In the far distance, there is the sound of scraping rock – the boulder is being moved across the opening of the cave.*

*The Chorus, increasingly unsettled, begin to mutter and murmur between themselves. They start to point, some towards where Antigone left, some towards Creon, some in the opposite direction...*

*... Creon realises a rebellious uprising could occur. The dissention in the Chorus and the mutterings grow louder, and Creon is about to put them in their place when suddenly Teiresias enters, led by his Guide.*

### SCENE SIXTEEN

Teiresias:       An old blind man is here,  
                      Hand in hand with his eyes.

Creon:            And why?

Teiresias:       To pass on a prediction.

Creon:            Well, I will pay heed,  
                      You were a perfect guide in the past –  
                      I owe this city's health to you.

Teiresias:       Yes, you were wise then –  
                      But now your whole world may fall.

Creon:            What is that? Why?

Teiresias: I was sat listening for signals in the breeze,  
In the songs of the birds around me.

Suddenly I heard a screech,  
A clash of wings,  
They beat madly in battle,  
Again and again.  
Creon, these turbulent creatures  
Tore chunks from each other  
With flashing beak and frantic claw.  
Blood-stained feathers fell onto my face.  
Directly they flew into each other's paths –  
Birds turned to butchers.  
They were at war.

But that is not all.  
I reached home to find  
Dogs and rats had scattered  
Maggot-ridden meat  
All across my table.  
Flesh of a mutilated man,  
Left untended by your decree.

Creon, this State is sick.  
You and your principles are the cause.  
You cannot wreak revenge  
On Polyneices' remains.  
You are stabbing at someone  
That is already dead.

All men make mistakes.  
There is no shame in that.  
But not all have the humility  
To provide a cure.

Creon: Do you intend to profit from this obscene advice?  
Did someone pay you to say it?  
I'll not empty my own pockets –  
These words of yours are worthless.

Teiresias: You are polluting this place!

Creon: The disease was carried  
By the rebel who now rots.  
His defilement  
Is no cause for concern.

Teiresias: I have never lied before.

Creon: But now you make wild claims  
Because you want my wealth.

Teiresias: Don't force me to shout secrets  
That shoot straight at your heart!

Creon: You can't change my mind  
And you can't collect my money.

Teiresias: More bodies will come,  
Including your child's.  
The trail of calamity  
Will continue –  
Corpse will follow corpse.  
Your own house will moan.  
You are forsaken already by your son,  
Because you hid a breathing girl  
Behind a boulder.

This sentence spirals out from one error.  
You can try to rule the living,  
But you cannot govern the dead.  
Bury your feelings,  
With the remains of that body,  
Or vengeance will rise.

Can you hear curses approaching from afar?  
Can you start to feel that first pang of pain?  
With each of your cries  
Your agony will dig deeper.  
You will not be spared a single sting.  
*(to his Guide)*  
Let us leave  
Before his tongue lashes out once more.

*Teiresias and his Guide exit.*

SCENE SEVENTEEN

*It is getting very dark now.*

*The Chorus are pointing in different directions, unsure of what to do, or in which direction to go.*

Chorus:            These promises plague us –  
                         That man is never wrong.

Creon:             I must not be seen to weaken –  
                         I cannot give way –

Chorus:            – That unbearable stink! –

Creon:             Lose respect or lose my son –  
                         How can I give way?

Chorus:            It is time to listen!

Creon:             So tell me what to do!

Chorus:            Release that girl,  
                         Remove the rock!  
                         And prepare a pyre  
                         For the rest of her brother!

Creon:             Should I?

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

Chorus:           Swiftly!  
                      Before fate strikes!

Creon:            I'll go myself,  
                      I'll take charge,  
                      I'll change both heart and mind –

*Creon rushes out.*

SCENE EIGHTEEN

Chorus:           Can anybody hear us?  
                      Can anybody heal us?

                      What in this world  
                      Always wants our ruin?

                      The darkness dances,  
                      Faster, faster –

SCENE NINETEEN

*Two Messengers enter.*

Messenger 1:   Where is the queen?

Chorus:           Do you bring her bad news?

Messenger 2: Once we looked up to Creon.  
He pulled us towards peace.

Messenger 1: Now who would envy him?  
All his life is gone.

Chorus: Is he dead?

Messenger 1: Dead inside.

*Eurydice has overheard and entered.*

Eurydice: But still alive?  
Spit out the truth.

Messenger 1: Dear Queen,  
We bathed Polyneices' body –

Messenger 2: – what we could find –

Messenger 1: – and burnt it, in the hope  
That a blast of black smoke  
Would drive evil away.  
Then we dashed on to the cave.

Messenger 2: But when we reached there,  
Deep inside we heard  
An unbearable howl.

Messenger 1: It echoed around.

Messenger 2: Creon's steps slowed –  
For that sound  
Was the voice of his son.

Messenger 1: Haemon had slipped through  
A gap in the rock.

Messenger 2: We heaved the entrance open.

Messenger 1: There inside, Antigone was dangling...  
She had created a noose from her dress.  
Haemon clung onto his lifeless love,  
His face drowning in sorrow.

Messenger 2: His father called to him –

Messenger 1: Haemon rushed forward,  
Spat in our king's face,  
Grabbed his dagger –

Messenger 2: But Creon stepped back.

Messenger 1: The knife was out,  
The knife needed a home,  
So Haemon plunged it deep  
Into his own chest.

Messenger 2: Blood was spilling over the stones.  
Spattering onto his beloved's pale body.

Messenger 1: His hand stretched for hers...  
Then he fell.  
My queen, in death  
Your child is married after all.

*Eurydice nods, turns, and leaves.*

Chorus: Why was she silent?

*No answer.*

Chorus: Has she gone to prepare the house  
To mourn?

*No answer.*

Chorus: Is she so upset she cannot speak?

Messenger 1: I will go look.

*The First Messenger follows after Eurydice.*

Chorus: The blind man saw it all.

SCENE TWENTY

*The Chorus hears the howls of Creon as he approaches, holding the body of his son.*

Creon:           AHHH!! AHHH!!  
                  Here we are,  
                  The murdered and the murderer!

Chorus:         Too late we grasp  
                  What is right and wrong.

Creon:           Ahhh!!  
                  All I have is pain!  
                  Suffering at last  
                  Forces me to see...

SCENE TWENTY-ONE

*The First Messenger re-enters.*

Messenger 1:   Prepare to see more.  
                  There is worse still to come.

*Creon is kneeling, stroking his son's face, heaving with desperate sobs.*

Creon:           Nothing, nothing can be worse –

Messenger 1: Your wife is dead.  
She used your sharpest sword.

*Creon screams. He wants to tear out his eyes.*

Creon: Wrong again!!  
This will never end!!  
– my son – my wife –  
I tried to punish the dead –  
Now I must endure  
Slaughter after slaughter  
And never be slain!  
So much misery,  
Caused by my command!  
All of you, all of you,  
Hack into me!  
The guilt is all mine!  
Pelt me with blows,  
Stab at my arrogance,  
Smash me to dust!

*The wind is rising. Some of the Chorus begin to look up at the sky.*

Chorus: The only wisdom is to submit.  
Accept everything is unknown.

No protection anywhere.

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

Creon: But –

*Creon tries to stand, but he keeps losing his balance.*

Creon: *(pointing at one of the Chorus)*

I did it for you –

*(pointing to another, stumbling)*

– I did it for you...

... every turn is wrong...

... earth is tilting away...

... sky is tumbling...

*The Chorus feel it too. A rumbling is growing.*

Chorus: This will never end.

Judgement is descending.

*The Chorus look at the audience.*

Chorus: Get out of this place now.

Cover your eyes.

Cover your nose.

Cover your mouth.

If you have legs then use them,

Before black clouds come,

Antigone, in a new version by Adrian Osmond

Before true terror is unleashed,  
Before blasting wind  
And rushing water  
Rip every reckless living thing away –

RUN.

RUN.

RUN.

*The Chorus look up to the skies as the storm descends towards them.*

*The roar of the gale, the cries of animals, the wails of the people, the pound of rain on barren earth all mount, louder and louder, until –*

*– everything is black.*

**END**