

Plays for Young Audiences

a partnership of Seattle Children's Theatre and Children's Theatre Company-Minneapolis

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Antigone

Based on the Play by
Sophocles

Adapted for the Stage by
Greg Banks

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Cast of Characters

- Messenger/Eteocles/Sentry
- Ismene/Sentry
- Haemon/Polynices
- Antigone
- Creon
- Eurydice/Tiresias

Ensemble includes: Chorus

Messenger Right, here we are. Everyone ready?

Chorus Yeah!

Messenger Everyone ready?

Chorus Yeah!!!

Messenger *(drums)* We are here to tell you the story of Antigone.
(he throws the ball to Ismene)

Ismene That skinny young woman, up there, sitting by herself, dark hair, staring into space, seeing nothing. That's Antigone. She is thinking. *(throws ball to Messenger)*

Messenger She is thinking, that any minute now she will burst forth as the tense

Haemon willful girl

Ismene Who is never taken seriously by her family

Chorus (4) Who is never listened to

Chorus (7) And who is about to rise up alone against Creon -

Antigone my uncle, the King

Messenger She is also thinking that because of what she will do she is going to die.

Chorus (8) Antigone is young, she's only fifteen,

Messenger She would much rather live than die

Creon But there is no help for it.

Antigone When your name is Antigone, there is only one part you can play; and you have to play it right through to the end.

Messenger From the moment we started telling you about these people, Antigone began to feel that inhuman forces were whirling her out of this world, snatching her away from everything she knows, from Ismene, her sister

Eurydice That's the girl you can see chatting and smiling with that young man.

Ismene The young man is Haemon the king's son.

Messenger Forces were whirling Antigone away from all of us who sit or stand here,

Chorus (5) not in the least upset ourselves,

Messenger because we are not doomed to die this day (*music out*) and she is.
(*music resumes*)

Ismene Haemon is engaged to Antigone and expecting to marry her.

Chorus (2) He won't of course.

Creon He didn't know when he proposed to her that it would mean that he would have to die sooner than he might other wise have done.

Haemon That powerfully built man standing lost in thought, that's Creon the King, my father. His face is lined. He is tired. He is a leader of men, it's a difficult job. He wasn't always like this, he used to like listening to music, having a beer, kicking a ball around, he used to be different, (*music out*) he used to laugh.

Eteocles/Polynices We also play the brothers of Antigone and Ismene.

Eteocles (Messenger) Eteocles! (*drum*)

Polynices (Haemon) Polynices! (*drum*) Creon has a wife, a queen.(*music resumes*) Her name is Eurydice, she sits and knits and knits and she will go on knitting throughout this story until the time comes for her to go to her room and die. (*music out*)

Ismene She is a good woman. But she is no help to her husband.

Eurydice Creon has to face the music alone. That young man with the ball, he's the messenger

Messenger Later on, I will come running in, red faced for the first time in my life, to tell you that

Haemon Haemon is dead.

Messenger But before I get the chance to introduce all of the people, we will be interrupted

Chorus (3) Great. So once again we're invisible

Chorus (7) Just the chorus

Chorus (8) too young

Chorus (6) Not major players, so we don't even get names

Chorus (8) no one gets to know who we are!

Messenger There isn't time

Chorus (1) there never is.

Messenger We will be interrupted by a battle

Chorus (1) yeah a battle we will have to fight in

Chorus (2) and die in

Messenger we will be interrupted by a battle (*drumming moves chorus to battle positions*)

Antigone A battle that will leave my two brothers

Eteocles(Messenger) Eteocles (*chorus "huh! Huahh!"*)

Antigone and

Polynices(Haemon) Polynices,

Eurydice fighting,

Antigone fighting to the death,

Eurydice a battle that will change the course of all their lives,

Antigone as battles always do

Creon The army of

Polynices(Haemon) Polynices!

All Polynices

Creon Forces of evil

Chorus (all) evil

Creon gathered against us

Chorus (all) us (*marching*)

Creon built weapons of war

Chorus (all) weapons

Creon Threatened us

Chorus (all) threatened

Creon tried to destroy us

Chorus (all) Destroy.

Creon Us. The city of Thebes.

Chorus (all) Our city
Our people

Eteocles(Messenger) In angry dispute the enemies voice was

Polynices(Haemon) lifted against

All us (*Drumming. The ensemble moves to Polynices*)

Chorus(Eurydice, Ant., 2) Like a scavenging bird of prey

Ismene, 1, 4 He swooped around us

Chorus (8) With white wings flashing

Antigone With flying plumes

Haemon With armed soldiers ranked in thousands

Ismene, 1, 5, 7 in a circle of blood

Eurydice His swords stood around us

Creon His jaws were opened against us;

Messenger But before he could taste our blood,
Eurydice Or consume us with fire
Ismene He fled
Chorus (all) fled
Creon Fled with the roar
Chorus (all) roar
Creon roar of the dragon behind him
Chorus (all) And thunder of war in his ears
(Drumming. Eteocles & Polynices meet for battle.)
Antigone A battle that will leave my two brothers
Eteocles^(Messenger) Eteocles *(two drum hits)*
Polynices^(Haemon) Polynices. *(two drum hits)*
Eurydice Fighting
Antigone Fighting to the death. *(3 bars of drumming on barrels)*
Eteocles/Polynices And it was agreed that when our father died, *(7 bars drumming)*
we should share the throne *(continue fighting; tapping with wood)*
Creon But when Eteocles had reigned a full year
Polynices He refused to yield up the throne to his younger brother
Antigone My two brothers fought
Creon and they killed one another in single combat outside the city walls.
(4 bars of drumming)
Antigone Sister! Sister Ismene!
Have you heard the order, the latest order that the King has proclaimed to

the city? Have you heard how our nearest and dearest are being treated like enemies?

Ismene I have heard nothing about any of those we love.

Antigone I thought you hadn't.

Ismene What is it, Antigone?

Antigone Our two brothers.....
Creon has given funeral honours to one,
and not to the other; (*wine glasses*)
Eteocles has been buried, in state,
With all honourable observances due to the dead.
But Polynices, just as unhappily fallen - the order
says he is
To be left unburied, unwept, a feast of flesh
For keen eyed carrion birds. The noble Creon!
It is against you and me he has made this order.
And soon he will be here himself
to make it plain to those that have not heard it,
and to enforce it. This is no idle threat;
The punishment for disobedience is death by stoning. (*slam, wine glasses
cease*)
So now you know.

Ismene Antigone, if this is really true,
what more can I do, to help you?

Antigone Will you help me? Will you do something with me?

Ismene Help you do what, Antigone?

Antigone Will you help me lift the body? You and me? (*wine glasses*)

Ismene You cannot mean to bury Polynices against the order?

Antigone Is he not my brother, and yours, whether you like it or not?

I shall never desert him.

Ismene How could you dare when Creon has expressly forbid it?

Antigone He has no right to keep me from my own.

Ismene And what will be the end of us,
if we break the law and defy our king?
O think, Antigone; We are women; it is not for us
to fight against men; our rulers are stronger than we.
May the dead forgive me, I can do no other
but as I am commanded; to do more is madness. (*wine glasses cease*)

Antigone Then I will not ask you for help.
go your own way; I will bury my brother;
And if I die for it, what happiness!
Live. Live, if you will;
Live and defy the holiest laws of heaven.

Ismene I do not defy them; but I cannot act
against the State. I am not strong enough.

Antigone Let that be your excuse, then. I will go
and heap a mound of earth over my brother.

Ismene I fear for you Antigone; I fear-

Antigone You need not fear for me. Fear for yourself.

Ismene At least be secret. Do not breathe a word
I'll not betray your secret.

Antigone Publish it, (*chorus: "shhhh" then wine glasses*) to all the world!
Else I shall hate you more

Ismene Your heart burns! Mine is frozen at the thought.

Antigone I know my duty, where true duty lies.

Ismene If you can do it, but you're bound to fail

Antigone When I have tried and failed, then shall I have failed

and not till then

Ismene No sense in starting on a hopeless task (*wine glasses cease*)

Antigone Oh, I shall hate you if you talk like that Despair and hopelessness hold you in your place, powerless to act, powerless to change that which you don't agree with, to stand up to injustice, I can't make a difference, no one will listen to little me, what if I get into trouble, There is no punishment Can rob me of my honourable death.

Ismene Go then, if you are determined, to your folly.
But remember that those who love you....love you still...those who love you, love you still (*drums*)

(*The chorus of triumphant Thebans rejoice their victory*)

Creon War is over! The battle ended!

Chorus (all) We Won! We Won! We Won! We Won! We Won! We Won! We Won!

Chorus(2 , Messenger) Great is the victory

Chorus(1, 3, 6, 7) great is the joy

Chorus(3, 6, 7, 8) We bombed the sons of bitches

Chorus (all) boy o boy

Chorus (2, 4, 5, Messenger) we blasted them to hell.

Chorus (all) we strutted our stuff
had enough, had enough, had
enough is enough is enough is enough is enough is enough is enough
Top dogs. Hooooooooowl!

Chorus(1, 8 , Anti., Mess.) A just war.

Chorus (2, Haemon) A good war

Chorus (3, 5, 6, Ant.) not just another war

Chorus (all) a necessary war

Chorus(1, Mess., Hae.) a good war cuz

Chorus (Messenger) god he is on our side

Chorus (all) won

Chorus (Messenger) our side

Chorus (all) won

Chorus (Messenger) our side, our side,

Chorus (all) won won won won

Chorus (1, 7, 8) great be the joy

Chorus (2, Haemon) In the city of

Chorus (all) Thebes!

Chorus (Eurydice) Now is the time to fill the temples
with glad thanksgiving for warfare ended; *(drumming/celebration)*
(The music changes to fanfare to signal the King's arrival)

Chorus (all) But see the King comes here,
(Creon enters and pulls out his beer. Greek music for all to dance to.)

Creon My councilors!

Chorus (all) *(chanting)* Creon! Creon! Creon! Creon!

Creon Now that the gods have brought our city
Safe through a storm of trouble to tranquility, *(Ensemble exhales)*
I have called you especially out of all my people
To conference together, *(Ensemble cheers; Arsenio "whoops")*
I have always held the view,
And hold it still that a king whose lips are sealed
By fear, unwilling to seek advice, Is damned. *(Ensemble responds:*
"yeah")
And no less damned is he who puts a friend

Above his country.

(Ensemble responds: yeah!)

I have made a proclamation *(fanfare)*

concerning the brothers of Antigone and Ismene, as follows:

Eteocles, who fell fighting in defense of the city,

fighting gallantly, is to be honored with burial

and with all the rites due to the noble dead.

(Ensemble cheers, ending in funeral pose)

The other-you know who I mean- his brother Polynices

(Ensemble blechs)

who came back from exile intending to burn and destroy

his fatherland to drink the blood of his kin,

to make them slaves-

(Ensemble boos)

He is to have no grave, no burial,

no mourning from anyone: it is forbidden.

(Ensemble applauds)

He is to be left unburied, left to be eaten

by dogs and vultures, a horror for all to see.

I am determined that never, if I can help it,

shall evil triumph over good.

(Ensemble cheers)

Alive or dead, the faithful servant of his country

(brings a member of the audience to the center and raises arm in air)

shall be rewarded.

(Ensemble cheers)

Chorus (1) Creon, you have given your judgment

Chorus (2) Judgment,

Chorus (8) for the friend,

Chorus (7) and for the enemy.

Chorus (6) Your will is law.

Creon See then that it be kept.

(Fanfare. Creon exits.)

Sentry(Messenger) *(gasps)* The corpse. The corpse! Help!

Sentry(Ismene) The corpse! Come on!

Sentries Costumes! *(ad libs while putting on Sentry hats and coats)*

Sentry(Messenger) Ready?

Sentry(Ismene) Ready.

Sentries Has anyone seen the King? Where's the king?! Ladder!

(They retrieve and get up on the ladder)

Sentries Sir? Sir?

Sentry(Ismene) If we are out of breath

Sentry(Messenger) It is not from haste

Sentry(Ismene) We have not been running

Sentry(Messenger) On the contrary, many a time

Sentry(Ismene) We stopped to think and loiter on the way

Sentry(Messenger) Saying to ourselves

Sentry(Ismene) Why hurry to your doom poor fools?

Sentries And then we said

Sentry(Ismene) Hurry you fools, if Creon hears this from other men,
Your heads are as good as off.

Sentry(Messenger) Sir? Sir? *(the sentries move the ladder closer to Creon)* Sir? Sir?

Creon You tell your story with a deal of artful precaution.

Sentry(Messenger) We never did it sir.

Sentry(Ismene) Nor saw who did it.

Creon Good heavens, men, whatever is the matter?
It's evidently something strange.

Sentry(Messenger) So strange

Sentry(Ismene) It's very difficult to tell

Creon Well out with it, and let's be done with you.

Sentry(Ismene) It's this, sir

Sentry(Messenger) The corpse.

Sentries Someone has buried it

Creon What? Who dared to do it?

Sentries We don't know sir.

Sentry(Ismene) Whoever it was left no clues behind him.

Sentry(Messenger) the corpse was covered
not with a proper grave

Sentry(Ismene) just a layer of earth. Then one of the men said something that made our
blood run cold

Sentry(Messenger) What he said was

Sentry(Ismene) This must be reported to the King.

Sentries So it was agreed and we

Sentry(Messenger) Such is our luck

Sentry(Ismene) Were chosen.

Sentries So here we are. Sir? Sir? *(They climb up to talk to Creon, Creon climbs
down)*

Sentries Sir? Sir?

Chorus (all) My lord!

Chorus (4) I feared it from the first

Chorus (8) This may prove to be an act of the gods

Creon Enough of that.
 Blasphemy, to say that the Gods could give a thought
 to carrion flesh! No, there's a party of malcontents
 in the city, rebels against my word and law,
 shakers of heads in secret, impatient of rule;
 They are the people, I see it well enough
 who have bribed these men with
 Money!
 Money's the curse of man, that's what wrecks cities, banishes men from
 home, tempts and deludes the most well meaning soul, pointing out the
 way to infamy and shame.
 Well they shall pay for their success

(To sentries)

See to it! *(drumming; sentries back up on the ladder)*
 Either you find the perpetrator of this burial
 and bring him here into my sight, or death-
 No not their mere death
 but for a living lesson against such infamy
 What shall I do?
 you shall be racked and tortured till you tell
 the whole truth of this outrage.

Sentry (Ismene) May I say more

Creon No more; each word you say but stings me more.

Sentry (Ismene) Stings in your ears, sir, or in your deeper feelings?

Creon Don't bandy words, fellow, about my feelings

Sentry(Messenger) Though he offends your ears, sir, it is not he,
but he that's guilty that offends your soul.

Creon Oh, born to argue, were you?

Sentry(Ismene) Maybe so; but still not guilty in this business

Creon Doubly so, if you have sold your soul for money

Sentry(Messenger) To think that thinking men should think so wrongly!

Creon Think what you will. But if you fail to find
the doer of this deed, you'll learn one thing;
ill gotten gains bring no one any good.

Sentries *(writing on a post-it)* Ill-gotten...File that!

Creon See to it.
(Sentries exit)

Creon Great honour is given
And power to him who upholdeth his country's laws
And the justice of heaven.

(Music. Antigone is arrested by the sentries and brought to face Creon)

Chorus (6) Oh my god.

Chorus (1) It's Antigone

Chorus (7) Antigone!

Chorus (5) She's been arrested.

Chorus (3) Hey, Antigone

Chorus (2) Where are they taking you?

Chorus (7) What's happening?

Chorus (8) Are you all right?

Creon Antigone! What is this?

(sentries report to Creon)

Untie her.

(sentries run to Antigone)

Who is guarding the body?

(sentries report to Creon...again)

Sentry(Messenger) We sent for the relief.

Sentry(Ismene) Sir.

Creon I told you not to open your mouth about this!

Sentry(Ismene) Nobody's said anything, sir.

Creon Where did these men find you? Untie her.

(sentries run to Antigone and untie her)

What were you doing near your brother's body?

You knew what my orders were.

Sentry(Ismene) What was she doing? Sir, *(sentries report to Creon)*

that's why we brought her in. She was digging up

the dirt with her nails. She was trying to cover up the body all over again.

Creon Do you realize what you are saying.

Sentry(Messenger) After we reported to you, we went back,

and first thing we did, we uncovered the body

Sentry(Ismene) The sun was coming up and it was beginning to smell.

Sentry(Messenger) So we moved it up onto a little hill

Sentry(Ismene) To let the wind get at it.

We didn't expect any trouble in broad daylight.

But when I turned round there she was,

clawing away at the dirt with both hands

Sentry(Messenger) Right out in broad daylight!

Sentry(Ismene) Wouldn't you think when she saw me she'd stop and leg it out of there.

Sentry(Messenger) Not her! She went right on digging as fast as she could.

Sentry(Ismene) As if we weren't there at all. And when I grabbed her she

Sentry(Messenger) scratched, bit, yelled

Antigone leave me alone, I haven't finished yet, the body isn't all covered.

Creon Is this true?

Antigone Yes it's true

Sentry(Messenger) We scraped the dirt off as fast as we could

Creon And was it you who covered the body the first time?

Antigone Yes it was.

Sentry(Ismene) Sir, she was clawing away like a wild animal.

Sentry(Messenger) I said, that must be a dog.

Sentry(Ismene) Dog, I said, that's a girl, that is.

Sentry(Messenger) And it was.

Creon That's enough. You can wait outside.

Sentries Can we tie her up again?

Creon No.

Sentries Right.

(Sentries exit)

Creon Had you told anybody what you meant to do?

Antigone No.

Creon Did you meet anyone on your way, coming or going?

Antigone No, nobody.

Creon Sure of that, are you?

Antigone Perfectly sure

Creon Very well. Now listen to me. You will go straight to your room.

Antigone Like a child , who's overtired

Creon When you get there.

Antigone I'm fifteen.

Creon You will go to bed. Somebody read her a bedtime story. You will say that you are not well and that you have not been out since yesterday.

Antigone You are going to a lot of trouble for nothing. You know I'll do it all over again, tonight.

Creon Why do you want to bury your brother?

Antigone How can you even ask that. He was my brother.

Creon I had forbidden it.

Antigone *(to audience)* He was my brother. Everyone has the right to a proper burial, without that, their souls are lost and wander forever, they never find peace, are never at rest.

Creon Polynices was a rebel and a traitor, and you know it.

Antigone He was my brother.

Creon You all heard the edict.

Antigone Of course we did.

Creon You knew the punishment I decreed for any person who attempted to give him burial.

Antigone Yes, we knew the punishment.

Creon But she thought that because she was my niece and was going to marry my son, I shouldn't dare have her killed.

Antigone You are wrong. I didn't think that. I never doubted for an instant that you would have me put to death.

Creon Hand *her* over to be killed. I have other plans for her. She's going to marry Haemon, and I want her to fatten up a bit, so that she can give him a sturdy boy. Hey! Don't talk to him. *(re: audience person)* Don't talk to

anyone. And don't annihilate me with those eyes. I know that she thinks I am a brute, but the fact is I have always been very fond of her, stubborn though you always were.

(Antigone gets up and leaves)

Where are you going?

Antigone You know very well where I am going.

Creon What sort of games are you playing?

Antigone I am not playing games.

Creon You know that if anyone finds out what you have tried to do, it will be impossible for me to avoid putting you to death. There is a chance that can save you, but only if you give up your crazy pursuit.

Antigone I must go and bury my brother.

Creon Even if she did cover him with earth again, the earth would again be removed.

Antigone I know all that. I know it. But that much, at least I can do. And what a person can do, a person ought to do.

Creon Why, Antigone, why? For whose sake?

Antigone I don't know. For nobody. For myself. Stop feeling sorry for me. Stop feeling sorry for me! Do your job. But if you are a human being do it quickly.

Creon I want to save you Antigone. I want to save her.

Antigone He is the king, and he is all powerful. But that you cannot do.

Creon Have you tortured?

Antigone Why would you do that? To see me cry? To hear me beg for mercy? Or swear whatever you wish, and then begin over again?

Creon You listen to me. You have cast me as the villain in this little play of yours, and yourself as the heroine, and you know it, you damned little mischief maker. But don't you drive me too far! If I were one of your preposterous little tyrants, you would be lying in a ditch this minute, with your tongue slit and your body drawn and

quartered. Instead I let you go on arguing.

Antigone Let me go. You are hurting my arm.

Creon I will not let you go.

Antigone Oh!

Creon What fun for you eh? To be able to spit in the face of a king who has all the power in the world. Anyone else want to try? A man who has done his share of killing in his day. Say it! "I will not bury my brother." Please
(repeats)

Antigone Now you are squeezing my arm too tightly, it doesn't hurt any more.

Creon I shall save you yet. God knows I have enough to do today without wasting my time on an insect like you. If it was up to me I would have had them bury your brother long ago as a mere matter of public hygiene. But if this featherheaded rabble I govern are to understand what's what, that stench has got to fill the town for a month.

Antigone You are a loathsome man!

Creon I agree. My trade forces me to be.

Antigone Why do you do it at all.

Creon One morning I woke up and found myself King. God knows there were other things I loved in life more than power.

Antigone Then you should have said no.

Creon That would have been cowardly. So I said yes.

Antigone So much the worse for you, then. I didn't say yes.

I frighten you. That is why you talk about saving me. Everything would be so much easier if I were a docile tongue-tied little Antigone.

You didn't really want to leave my brother's body unburied, did you?

Say it. Admit that you didn't.

Creon I have said it already.

Antigone But you did it just the same. And now, though you don't want to do it – he doesn't want to do it, but he is going to have me killed -

you are going to have me killed. And you call that being a King.

Creon Yes I call that being a King. God in heaven! Won't you try to understand me. There had to be one man who said yes. Somebody had to agree to captain the ship.

Chorus(Messenger) The ship is sinking

Chorus (Ismene) loaded to the waterline with crime

Chorus (5) Ignorance

Chorus (2) Poverty

Chorus (Eurydice) The wheel swinging in the wind

Chorus (Haemon) The crew refusing to work

Chorus (Messenger) looting the cargo

Chorus (1) the officers building a raft

Chorus (7) to slip overboard

Chorus (6/Haemon) and desert the ship

Chorus (Mess./ 4) mast splitting

Chorus (Ism/Eury/ 3) wind howling

Chorus (1, 8) sails ripping

Chorus (all) about to drown